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**Downtown Ambassadors:
Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage**

By
Mark Sleiman

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
Through the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

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2008

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ABSTRACT

This research thesis assesses the workings and governance implications of hospitality and security enhancement teams referred to as 'ambassadors' in the downtowns of three Ontario cities undertaking urban regeneration efforts. Through the analysis of employee manuals and seventeen in-depth interviews with ambassadors, their supervisors and local police representatives, this study examines the specific ways in which ambassadors fulfill elements of security provision. The central foci of ambassadors' practices are found to be surveillance, the collection and dissemination of knowledge, and legal enforcement through the invocation of municipal law. This thesis analyzes these findings within the framework of the sociology of governance and specifically a nodal network perspective. It is argued that through a dominant 'clean and safe' governing mentality and by avoiding the appearance of security provider, ambassadors police downtowns for a business-oriented order. Consequently, ambassadors can be understood as an innovative and agile - yet comparatively weak - node in the network of downtown security and governance.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK - THE SOCIOLOGY OF GOVERNANCE	4
3. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES	12
5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	16
BACKGROUND	16
NODAL SURVEILLANCE	21
<i>Public police surveillance</i>	21
<i>BIA surveillance</i>	24
<i>Community services surveillance</i>	30
<i>'Eyes and ears' as personal skills training</i>	31
THE COLLECTION AND NODAL TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE	33
<i>The beneficiaries and necessity of knowledge work</i>	34
<i>Knowledge work as the ambassadors' raison d'être</i>	38
CLEAN AND SAFE?	42
<i>Clean and safe - the physical and the social</i>	43
<i>Ambassador deterrence</i>	45
<i>Checking doors and safety escorts</i>	48
<i>Creating safety through media relations</i>	49
<i>Ambassadors: personally clean and safe?</i>	50
LAW INVOCATION	55
<i>Invoking strategies</i>	56
<i>Discretion</i>	57
<i>Police and supervisor apprehension</i>	58
<i>Failures and successes</i>	60
INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC POLICE	65
GROWTH AND FAILURE	68
6. CONCLUSION	71
REFERENCES	79
APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPLICATION	82
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION	94
APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH	96
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING	98
APPENDIX E: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER	99
VITA AUCTORIS	100

1. INTRODUCTION

This research thesis aims to assess the workings and governance implications of hospitality and security enhancement teams referred to as ‘ambassadors’ in three Ontario cities. The impetus for this research lies in the proliferation of urban regeneration programs throughout city centres across North America. As Coleman, Tombs and Whyte (2005) observe, cities across the Western world have recently begun to enact programmes to reimagine their public image and improve their municipal economy. Within such rejuvenation efforts a concerted effort is being undertaken to create positive brand images to drive economic and cultural development. Crucial to such endeavours is the establishment of Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), special alliances comprised of local business owners who seek to enhance investment and promotion within their local geographic area. A primary way that BIAs have sought to bring about increased consumption is through image improvement. In response to such aesthetic preferences of customers, BIAs have increasingly focused on themes of ‘clean and safe’ in response to counter images of downtowns as dirty and dangerous places to shop (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006; Greene, Seamon, & Levy, 1995). BIAs have sought to bring this about through various image improvement expenditures to showcase safe and consumer-oriented environments, particularly streetscaping enhancement, improved street lighting and, most significantly, the creation of ambassador programs.

Ambassadors patrol BIA districts to assist and guide tourists. According to one city’s ambassador program, ambassadors’ official duties include providing the public with directions, referrals and promotional brochures, publicizing special events such as festivals, and providing minor medical assistance (Manual 2). As another Downtown BIA

elucidates in its manual, the mandate of its downtown ambassador program is to “greet and welcome everyone” while “creating increased awareness for and visibility of Downtown businesses” (Manual 3).

Yet, research has indicated that ambassadors fulfill more than such official discourse lets on. In a study of the various security aspects of the Downtown Vancouver BIA (DVBIA), Huey, Ericson, and Haggerty (2005) found that a less explicit duty of downtown ambassadors is to actively patrol the BIA in search of criminal activity and ensure order maintenance. After spotting conduct perceived as disorderly (including panhandling, squeegeeing, etc.) ambassadors were required to ask the offending persons to cease their behaviour and relocate elsewhere. Trained with knowledge of law and given the BIA’s permission to act in ways that protect property owned by BIA members, ambassadors in Vancouver reportedly threatened legal action to those who failed to comply with their demands. Through this lesser known function, this previous research had led me to envision ambassadors as a form of security agent predicated on attaining environs conducive to the profit-based interests of their BIA bosses.

This research seeks to contribute to academic literature on governance and policing. Since ambassadors typically work through BIAs, I explored how ambassador programs act as an innovative way in which to police this new business-oriented order, especially as a new form of private security. Ambassador programs never have been substantively studied; research is greatly lacking. As well, ambassador programs provide a potentially unique blend of security and hospitality: they at once provide helpful instruction and information while maintaining vigilance for crime and disorder. For these reasons, my research provides an excellent opportunity to make a noteworthy substantive

contribution.

To analyze ambassador programs, I turned to the sociology of governance. As a theoretical framework, the sociology of governance permits analysis of the specific policing and security aspects inherent in ambassador programs. Within this sociology of governance I located ambassadors specifically in a nodal network perspective. By recognizing the growing plurality of policing agents and entities, a nodal perspective situates ambassadors within the developing assemblage of policing and security provision.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK - THE SOCIOLOGY OF GOVERNANCE

In a general sense governance involves the development and implementation of ways to achieve and maintain prescribed goals and objectives (Johnston & Shearing, 2003: 24). The sociology of governance seeks to study this process, specifically to analyze how social institutions, practices and identities are constituted by broadly prescribed governing objectives within a society. By considering how governance operates, the sociology of governance also aims to chart the general trends and collective rationalities inherent in dominant governing mentalities (Johnston & Shearing, 2003: 29). With insight into the processes and strategies of a specific form of governance - in this thesis the governance of security - governance can be recognized as involving reciprocal, multiple, and overlapping relations of power and authority.

As Hunt and Wickham (1994) note, governance is not the result of conspicuous and coercive personal power but rather broad mentalities which have no discernable beginning or end; it functions regardless of conscious awareness. Fundamental to this conceptualization, is the role of discourse as a system of meaning to reveal patterns of human thought and behaviour (Larner, 2000). Since discourse is variable and operates to shape governance arising from various governing authorities, it is contestable and encounters resistance from other authorities seeking to mobilize power.

One strength of the sociology of governance is acknowledgment of the competing governing authorities involved in the shaping and regulation of behaviour (Hunt & Wickham, 1994). By recognizing that social governance can arise from a diverse array of interests competing to mobilize others, the sociology of governance holds a special appreciation of power centres beyond the state (Rose & Miller, 1992). This is in sharp

contrast to earlier governance theories which focused on the centrality of 'The State' as the source of all governance. By exposing this diverse collection of players and strategies, the sociology of governance makes it possible to understand the prominent discourses in the regulation of human conduct (Dean, 1999).

In the context of governance and ambassador programs, I set out to explore how ambassadors provided security. A nodal perspective helps to provide a stronger, more multidimensional perspective to the analysis of the specific practices that the ambassadors undertake. It was my contention that ambassadors can be understood as a part of a larger, nodal network of security governance. Nodal governance asserts that a multiplicity of nodes (defined as governing entities and providers) coexist in multiple ways to produce diverse security outcomes (Wood & Shearing, 2007). Against popular explanations in governance studies that assert forms of control as occurring "at a distance" from dominant state-based interests (Rose & Miller, 1992), this networked conception provides a framework that imagines services and governance as split among a variety of governmental nodes. Although within this network the public police are a powerful, preeminent node, they only represent one provider of security in the increasingly networked arena of security. Fundamentally, nodal conceptions best recognize the diversity of nodes and how "nodes co-exist in a variety of ways that are time and space specific" (Shearing & Wood, 2003: 207). As a result, in the sociology of governance a nodal perspective would represent ambassadors as a new node in the 'policing assemblage' (Shearing, 2005: 58).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past thirty years the private policing industry has seen tremendous growth in both a Canadian and global context (Johnston, 1992; Jones & Newburn 2002; Lippert & O'Connor, 2003). Key to this development has been expansion in both the functions (Rigakos 2002; Law Commission of Canada, 2006) and number of private policing personnel (Shearing & Stenning, 1984). As the most recent Juristat publication on private policing industry indicates, as of 2001 the number of private security personnel in Canada outnumbered public police officers, a fact consistent with steady growth of private police in consecutive census periods (Swol, 1999; Taylor-Butts, 2004). One explanation for the increasing growth of private policing is the flexibility and capabilities of services to respond to varying degrees of insecurity and need. By offering finer gradations of policing activities, it is suggested the private sector can more specifically address market demands for enhanced protection, especially through preventative as opposed to reactive measures (Atkinson, 2003).

Addressing this growth and visibility of the private sector, scholars in policing research have recently sought to theoretically redefine the common understanding of policing. Johnston (1999) defines policing as any, "purposive strategy involving the initiation of techniques which are intended to offer guarantees of security to subjects" (178). Important to this definition is the recognition that policing is a general social function (Johnston, 1999: 176-177). As an activity that has been traditionally associated with the state and its specific 'Police' agencies, policing has become increasingly carried out by actors beyond the state governing authority (Shearing & Stenning, 1981; Rigakos, 2002; Loader, 1999).

While the scholarly literature on private policing is large, research on ambassador programs as a policing entity is virtually absent. They have only been studied on the periphery of research exploring other practices. In Huey et al.'s (2005) broad study of BIAs as urban entertainment districts ambassadors are briefly discussed within the context of various BIA security strategies. In Mitchell and Staeheli's (2006) study of the property redevelopment and privatization of a city centre urban plaza in metropolitan Southern California, ambassadors were studied only in their role of harassing or intimidating local homeless groups. In both studies ambassadors were not characterized as a form of policing and were not systematically interviewed or studied as the central focus of research. Only in Greene et. al.'s (1995) study of uniformed private security officers (known as community service representatives) in downtown Philadelphia has a variant of the ambassador concept been examined in extended form. More thorough research on ambassador programs and their policing functions was therefore taken up in this project.

These previous academic studies as well as media reports and ambassador program webpages pointed this research towards how ambassadors might potentially be a policing entity. One such idea led to the enquiry about how ambassador duties may entail surveillant functions. Given that BIA websites recognize that ambassadors usually make regular patrol rounds, I anticipated that ambassadors would have a constant vigilance for crime and other problems. In a North American urban landscape increasingly dominated by fixed closed circuit television surveillance cameras and other electronic equipment (Walby, 2005), ambassador programs conducting patrols is potentially a new and unique form of surveillance. Part of their distinctiveness lies in the ability of ambassadors to

actively observe and interact with the geographic landscape and populations they oversee. Another aspect of this surveillance theme is the characterization of ambassadors as the 'eyes and ears' of nodes (the BIA and public police) within the BIA district. Although this notion was mentioned by Huey et al. (2005) and self-professed by ambassadors themselves in a newspaper interview, nowhere has it been specified *how* they act as 'eyes and ears'. I explored this theme of surveillance and documented exactly how ambassadors surveil and collaborate with other nodes of security, particularly how they work in conjunction with public police. BIAs established ambassador programs in conjunction with local police forces to aid in basic training and provide means to assist ambassador programs.

One way this surveillance can be interpreted and understood is through the BIA using ambassadors for the purpose of collecting knowledge of the BIA area. With modern policing increasingly reliant on information gathering and knowledge sharing (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997), the power of ambassador surveillance is very valuable. This surveillance reveals knowledge of patterned social behaviour within the BIA. One case in point of this knowledge collection would be the documentation of medical assistance required and provided by ambassadors. Information on where and when medical attention is needed benefited not only BIA officials by enabling them to provide more timely assistance, but also by sharing with other nodes such as the police to indicate patterns of crime or dangerous areas in need of stricter policing. For instance, if frequent medical interventions were needed in areas close to adult entertainment lounges, the police would use such information to pressure aberrant establishments to change their policies and operations.

The transfer of this gathered knowledge from the BIA to the public police has not been documented in past policing research. A reason for the public police to forge a functional and cooperative relationship with ambassadors would be to gain information about the BIA territory's geographic and temporal patterns of crime and other problems. In past research and interviews it has been noted that ambassadors often have a direct radio frequency line to the local police services (Huey et al., 2005); this communication resource is a matter that ambassador programs negotiated with the police as part of the give and take within their cooperation to enhance security. Having a direct connection would benefit ambassadors by allowing them to report and solve problems more quickly and consequently allowing the police to achieve a faster response to BIA problems thereby benefiting both groups. The only way to validate this speculation was with my research. Consistent with Ericson and Haggerty (1997) it appears that the contemporary policing of territories and populations relies on the increasing commodification and trade of knowledge with multiple institutions working in conjunction in a nodal network. One glaring omission in terms of nodal governance is the lack of empirical studies of relations between private nodes and public police in networks of security.

In addition to a potential role as surveillance and knowledge workers, ambassadors also appear to play an active part in the legal enforcement and governance of the BIA. As Huey et al. (2005) found out in interviews with local BIA users, ambassadors in Vancouver may be trained with knowledge of local anti-panhandling laws and basic understanding of property laws (160-161). However, their use of these laws was never studied. This limits the generalizability of such practices to other BIAs. In addition, the BIA studied by Huey et al. (2005) was known to employ persons from a

local security company to work as full-time ambassadors, a circumstance which was not the case in the three cities that I studied. As a result, my research looked at the tendency for ambassadors to verbally intervene where they found potential problems, which would likely suggest that it is a general tendency of ambassador programs. I looked at how and to what extent ambassadors were instructed to invoke law by asking offending persons to stop and relocate their activities. Did ambassadors threaten to summon the public police if they did not receive compliance?

I also set out to look at which laws ambassadors were likely to enforce. Based on a general background of BIAs, and Huey et al.'s (2005) research, it is clear that ambassadors seek to encourage consumption in the BIA. At their core, ambassadors seek to deter behaviour which might create feelings of insecurity or damage to the promotion of the BIA. With such image-oriented profiles, ambassadors responded to criminal behaviour or social disorder in cases such as panhandling, loitering, public drunkenness, rowdiness, drug use and public urination. Since these behaviours are deemed to damage public images of a downtown as a 'clean' place, I examined the ambassador programs to see if they did in fact draw on the authority of multiple laws to eliminate such problematic behaviours. I expected to find the *Trespass to Property Act* and the *Safe Streets Act* as the main laws from which ambassadors invoked. These laws cover certain non-consuming, 'edge' groups who may be at the focal point of this ambassador governance including many homeless, panhandlers and youth. In one city which I studied, the city centre BIA has recently formed a 'Panhandling Task Force', headed by an influential past chair of the BIA, seeking to proactively address and eliminate local panhandling. This development would be consistent with Huey et al.'s (2005) finding that

ambassadors have been accused of intimidation of various groups of adolescents and homeless whom they saw as either loitering or sleeping on sidewalks. Another prominent BIA goes so far as to imply this by advertising their ambassadors as a way to create an 'increased physical presence throughout the [BIA] zone' (Downtown Winnipeg BIZ) although there is no direct mention of law enforcement.

Such exclusion via legal enforcement appears generally consistent with the discipline and order which is sought by private businesses, specifically notable in places such as theme parks (including Disney franchises), stadiums, malls and other "mass private properties" (Shearing & Stenning, 1981). However, unlike Disney, BIA efforts which target human disorder attempt to bring about this instrumental order in public space. Since access to public space within BIA districts cannot be restricted, such developments are suggestive of how downtowns seem to redefine social space in terms of images supportive of new consumptive orders.

In the course of this research, I studied ambassadors in a new way by asking the question: to what extent and how are ambassadors a node of security? As sub-research questions I sought to determine: how do ambassadors function as 'eyes and ears' of other nodes and how might this surveillance fulfill the function of information collection or suggest a role of ambassadors as knowledge workers? How did ambassadors use or invoke law in their policing function as a private node? By conducting this research, I developed a better understanding of ambassadors in relation to their potential security role and investigated the extent to which they are a new node in the urban policing and security assemblage.

4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

For my investigation of the policing functions of ambassadors I used qualitative research methods, specifically personal interviewing. The format of these interviews took on an in-depth, open-focused form. This design allowed for flexibility in the order and content of the schedule of questions. This format also allowed probing questions through which I was able to ask for more elaboration of key details. Since there was some variation in the questions asked from participant to participant (for example, the administrative questions asked with police representatives compared to more experiential questions asked of ambassadors) this qualitative interviewing format provided the best way to accommodate variation in responses and elicit meaningful answers. Through this qualitative methodology I identified commonalities in interview responses about surveillance practices, relations with other nodes, and the ways that forms of law are invoked.

Information about ambassador programs was gathered by talking to a variety of persons. The main interview subjects were persons who had worked as ambassadors, a majority of whom no longer worked at the position. In total ten ambassador interviews were conducted and most ambassadors reported having worked over a year of experience with their program. Ambassadors commonly ranged in age from twenty to twenty-five years old, with two members being over forty years old. The ambassadors interviewed included seven female and three males with one male ambassador being represented from each program.¹ To locate ambassadors, a variety of sources were searched in order to find the names of potential ambassadors and if possible request interviews. Directly contacting BIA offices, searching for names found in public print media interviews and

asking for referrals from acquaintances produced all of the interviews.

In addition, others with information on the workings of the ambassador programs were interviewed. One police representative from each city who had familiarity with ambassador operations, being either involved the police orientation given to ambassadors or acting as administrative contact to program administrators, was interviewed. A third group of persons interviewed was made up of ambassador supervisors who are involved in the operation (hiring, scheduling, performance reviews) and non-police training of the ambassadors. Between these two groups seven interviews were conducted including three police officers and four ambassador program supervisors. By interviewing these persons, I gained a theoretical understanding of the workings of the ambassador programs, in part to discern the relations between ambassadors and other nodes. This helped to facilitate exploring the theme of nodal governance, while also providing additional sources for “triangulating” the data received from ambassadors (Ericson, Doyle, & Barry, 2003: 94). To arrange for interviews I corresponded via phone or email with appropriate subjects and provided appropriate return contact information and left it open for the person to decide if they did or did not want to participate.

To reach a wider range of interview participants I used snowball sampling methods (Babbie, 1998: 195). Due to the fact that most ambassadors are hired as seasonal employees from late spring to early fall period, during non-working months some ambassadors were more difficult to reach, including those who now live elsewhere. Since most ambassadors were typically in their early-to-mid twenties, many of them did in fact keep in contact with each other during non-working months or after their employment as ambassadors was finished. By snowball sampling, this population was easier to reach.

Most interviews were approximately one hour in length, with some lasting only a half hour and a few extending over two hours long. The police interviews tended to be shorter, while the interviews with the ambassador supervisors were the most lengthy, as they had the most information and knew the ins and outs of the ambassador programs, which allowed for more probing. All the ambassadors interviewed except one had more than a year of program experience with a few having as many as three years experience. Supervisors typically had the most familiarity and in-depth knowledge of ambassador operations. The four supervisors interviewed had a cumulative total of thirteen years of experience. At the times of the interviews three of the four supervisors were under confidentiality agreements with the BIA or ambassador program.

All of the interview subjects were guaranteed confidentiality and consented to both general interview participation and audio taping consent. To the extent possible the names of the subject cities have been anonymized. To facilitate this any characteristics or information that could lead to the any form of identification was omitted or masked following interview transcription. Where any of the subjects' statements could have lead to recognition, I have transformed their responses into generic categories.

To develop a better understanding of the social, political and economic context of each city in which ambassador programs were implemented I gathered and examined various primary and secondary documents. Sources such as municipal government websites, published ambassador newsletters, BIA annual reports and print media articles were studied. Additionally privileged ambassador program documents were obtained, including employee manuals from each program, various notes and recommendations from a taskforce evaluation done on a program, a copy of a PowerPoint presentation

outlining the history and statistical impacts of a program, a sample 'daily activity report' sheet, and a partial police training orientation syllabus.² Having this background knowledge helped to ensure more insightful interview questions and later analysis. To assist in the analysis of my transcribed interview data, I used qualitative analysis software called Non-Numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing (NUD*IST). This program helped me to organize and classify my data, ultimately making it easier to find patterns.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND

The three cities with ambassador programs which were studied in this research are similar in many respects. They are all dependent on manufacturing, a particularly stagnant economic sector as of late. Each city has a downtown district which has encountered economic stagnation and contains numerous boarded up or closed storefront businesses. Consequently all have found it difficult to attract and retain major retail businesses. Working to their benefit, they all have well established BIAs which have been in existence for more than ten years. A final similarity is that each city employs some amount of closed circuit television camera surveillance in the downtown to monitor security problems which have arisen in the last decade.

Each of the ambassador programs researched were originally initiated and operated through BIAs. However, in one instance, the operation of the program was transferred from the downtown BIA to a similarly mandated organization after its first year of operation. Despite the change in sponsoring organizations, this particular program's mission statement remained virtually unchanged and was nearly identical to that of the other ambassador programs researched. The three ambassador programs studied have operated for a period of four to five years.

When asked about the motivation for adopting an ambassador program each supervisor explained that their BIA had learned about the concept of ambassadors from attendance at a conference presentation. At this conference the original and longest running Canadian ambassador program made a presentation about the benefits of operating an ambassador program. Word of mouth about this out-of-province ambassador

program grew and a member from each of the three Ontario BIAs involved proposed the implementation of an ambassador program to their governing boards. One supervisor stated that initiating an ambassador program was seen as “taking the next step” in downtown renewal and that ambassadors would give the downtown a “new face” (Interview 4). None of the BIAs conducted a formal assessment or survey to determine the general need for such a program.

The original out-of-province program’s influence was evident from the beginning of this study. Many of its fundamental elements were copied closely by the new programs. The structure and wording of the ambassador operation manuals for all three new programs was similar to the initial program with some sections on procedures and instructions copied verbatim. In one city both the unique title of the original ambassador program as well as a unique regional-specific element of the uniform (a cowboy hat) was closely imitated. This piece of attire was later dropped by the imitating program when it was ridiculed for being grossly out of place in Ontario settings.

The original out-of-province program was to a large degree geared towards promoting downtown through improving the perceptions of safety. This great emphasis on security tended to be reflected in each Ontario program. While these new programs listed security as just one goal in their official mandates, the issue of safety tended to dominate their efforts in their early program years particularly because of their close adoption of the original program’s model. Following their pilot year of operations, two of the programs modified their exclusive focus on security to embrace hospitality, yet still maintained security goals in their respective mission statements. When interviewed, all the program supervisors vehemently denied and minimized to the point of avoidance any

suggestions that their program could be construed as any form of security. While these supervisors did concede that their programs may have indirectly contributed to safety, they stressed that their program had evolved from its originally adopted design. Later the programs reported modifying their objective and operations on a yearly basis sometimes by adjusting program elements such as hours of operation, the relative emphasis of hospitality and amount of time undertaking cleaning duties. Despite these changes the concern for security remained consistent throughout these years.

Two of the three ambassador programs researched operated on a year round basis with one program operating only in the summer season from the May long weekend to Labour Day. The two programs which operate year round usually have reduced hours in the non-summer months, typically operating only on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and days of special events. The hours of operations typically began around seven or eight a.m. and finished around nine p.m. although one program reported finishing at seven p.m.. The ambassadors in one program originally worked as late as eleven p.m. but this was scaled back to nine p.m. after the first summer of operation. For special events and festivals, ambassadors occasionally worked later night hours, sometimes past midnight.

Regarding compensation, two of the programs operated using paid employment and one was run on a volunteer basis. The hourly pay for the paid work programs was minimum wage in one case and about one and a half times minimum wage in the other. These same two programs considered incorporating volunteers into their operations but later decided against it because they perceived high turnover rates and consequently increased costs of training. Each program employed an average of eight ambassadors at any given time.

Ambassadors were recruited via municipal job banks, word-of-mouth, BIA websites, and people inquiring about the program at BIA headquarters. The two paid employment programs employed young adults typically ranging from nineteen to twenty-five years of age, with the exception of one person. These two programs also applied for and received Wage Subsidies from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) through a summer student job services grant. Overall the annual budgets of the three programs ranged from \$6,500 to \$100,000.

At the outset of operations, all three programs explicitly recruited students with backgrounds in policing, criminology or criminal justice. Eventually one program moved away from recruiting such students although not necessarily excluding them. Similarly another program opened its recruiting to a variety of students coming from different academic fields. They felt they would benefit from this diversity by attracting ambassadors with different skill sets such as experience working with the public.

For each program, ambassadors completed anywhere from one to two weeks of training, which was typically given or arranged for by the program supervisors. All ambassadors were given employee manuals usually twenty pages in length which outlined their duties and responsibilities. Training usually involved hospitality or customer service training. One program procured training from a provincial tourism education corporation which provided ambassadors with hospitality certificates upon completion. Other elements of training included cultural and historical awareness orientations, tours of visitor attractions, proper radio or phone protocol and basic certification in first aid and CPR. In addition ambassadors received training from police

services and community social service organizations. This training will be explored in later sections.

An interesting fact was that discovered during research was that all of the ambassador programs approached their municipal police services boards asking for operational and corporate support before initiating operations. All were subsequently provided with this support but in varying degrees. The ambassador-police relations will be explored in greater detail in subsequent sections.

NODAL SURVEILLANCE

A prevailing function of the ambassador role was to act as 'eyes and ears' while patrolling the streets. Their surveillance served to support their mandated goals of bringing about a hospitable, clean and safe downtown as well as establish positive relations with various organizations they recognized as community partners. Among these they most notably acted as surveillance for their local police services and sponsoring BIA. To a lesser degree they served broader interests such as municipal public health and community outreach social services. To gauge the specific aims of this surveillance, it was necessary to look at ambassador training as well as closely examine their reported everyday habits and practices. It should be noted that much surveillance conducted through ambassadors may assist multiple nodes and can vary in terms of focus based on time, place, and program directives. Even if there is no obvious overlap apparent in the order of presented findings, the surveillance of certain issues may benefit multiple nodes and therefore cannot be considered mutually exclusive.

Public police surveillance

When asked to explain the concept of 'eyes and ears', one ambassador supervisor said:

You're walking down the street and there's the two of you... you're talking, you're constantly assessing what's going on, in front of you and behind you, and beside you. Okay, so your 'eyes and ears' are all over the place. So if you see something coming at you down the street, and you feel in your gut that something's wrong, call it in. Or be on the look out, be aware. That's the 'eyes and ears' of the police. (Interview 10)

As an affiliate of the local police services, ambassadors are instructed to keep an eye out for certain things, most notably serious criminal activities. Such expectations are first

spelled out in all ambassador manuals: ambassadors are “to serve as additional ‘eyes and ears’ for the [municipal] Police Service” (Manual 3), specifically being “alert to any signs of disruptive, unsafe, criminal, or antisocial behaviours” (Manual 2). Furthermore should safety concerns be found ambassadors should record the incidence observed and either “alert [the] proper authorities when necessary” (Manual 1) or “recommend appropriate follow up” (Manual 3) after returning to base. Minor but not critical infractions such as panhandling, vandalism and graffiti were usually filtered first to the ambassadors’ supervisors who would then decide on the proper course of action to be taken. For many panhandling occurrences ambassadors did not necessarily make calls to the police, yet statistically made note of the occurrence for the BIA.

When interviewed, police representatives articulated their surveillant expectations of ambassadors. They emphasized that a fundamental aspect of being good ‘eyes and ears’ depended on ambassadors being reliable and coherent reporting sources who could make good, useful observations (Interviews 5, 16, 17). To support this function the police typically provided brief training to ambassadors. In order to visually and experientially prepare ambassadors for the types of criminal activity they would encounter, one police service provided a plainclothes downtown beat officer to take ambassadors on a familiarization tour of the downtown to “street proof” them to the types of crimes and problems they might encounter. As the training officer noted most ambassadors live in the suburbs away from downtown and are naive about the rough and tumble nature of downtown “rife with transients, drugs, alcoholics, emotionally disturbed persons and... sex theatres;” a place he stated turns into “a freak show” after the typical nine-to-five office workers leave downtown for the day (Interview 17). By pointing out known areas

of prostitution solicitation, crack houses, sketchy or violent bars and certain on-street drug dealing areas, he hoped his familiarization training would acclimatize ambassadors to the unsettling conditions they might encounter and the need to identify and then report criminal activity while on patrol. In addition such a walk-about was useful to point out "where all the hot spots are - places to be aware of, places to avoid, places to have your antenna up when you're around" (Interview 17). Familiarization training also occurs in another program studied where ambassadors are taught about specific surveillance-pertinent topics such as the classification and definition of criminal offences and clarification as to what constitutes a breach of the peace, among other things (Manual 2).

In conjunction with knowledge of hotspots or what constitutes a crime, ambassador training also potentially deals with the teaching of reporting protocol. Some protocol training given by police involved an orientation session for use of the 911 emergency reporting system. It was hoped that knowledge of the system would facilitate calls that would more closely mimic police communication procedure. This would allow for a faster response time due to more streamlined reporting requiring fewer questions from the dispatcher. An informal protocol that ambassadors were taught concerned making observations and reporting them to police services when at or near a crime scene. Ambassadors were taught how best to be "discreet observers" during their patrols, being conscious not to stare at or single out anyone and to walk a distance of at least a half-block away before making a call to police services (Interview 17). Such training helped the ambassadors avoid detection and produce better personal safety and hence develop into a steady information source for police.

In practice ambassadors reported on a wide range of criminal activity to the police. Among the three programs studied, nearly every type of common occurrence and crime typical of contemporary downtown was found. Ambassadors reported surveilling alcohol related occurrences involving public drinking and intoxication, the solicitation of prostitution, street level assaults, and in a few cases discovering concealed weapons and even a motor vehicle theft. While such problems are representative of an urban downtown context, their accounts here speak to the immediacy and accessibility of ambassadors' vigilance. These accounts lend credence to the claim of ambassadors being watchful and alert police 'eyes and ears'.

BIA surveillance

In addition to being 'eyes and ears' for police services, ambassadors also exercised surveillance for sponsoring organizations' interests. In this respect ambassador surveillance objectives included "assisting in the cleanliness of downtown by reporting areas of graffiti and refuse," reporting "posters and/or advertising (ex. stickers and decals) [at] unauthorized locations" and being mindful of general "quality of life concerns" (Manual 3). One employee manual describes a few such quality of life issues, specifically, in situations involving unconscious, intoxicated individuals or where "*any forms of panhandling*" [emphasis in original] is observed (Manual 1). Where panhandling is found ambassadors are instructed to get a good description of the person, note his or her location and fill out a "Suspect Identification Chart" upon returning to home base (Manual 1). A final illustration of ambassador surveillance concerned observing,

documenting and reporting any injuries that they come across in the downtown including assisting with minor cuts and scrapes.

To support the surveillance of graffiti and illegal postings ambassadors were given (by their supervisors) specific instructions for reporting their observations. In one program ambassadors were trained to note not only how many posters they saw (and soon removed) but also the compass-specific directions of the street corner intersection where they were found, for instance the North-West corner of Main-and-Minor Street. Such observations would be immediately called back to home base and recorded in daily activity report sheet. Ambassadors would also report graffiti - another major problem for BIAs - in a similar manner, at times setting out on graffiti sweeps to canvass the downtown district for areas especially in need of graffiti removal. One ambassador program went so far as to encourage its personnel to attend an out-of-town conference focusing on graffiti identification and eradication (Interview 7). Illegal markings and postings were considered damaging because they evoked an image of disorder.

In addition ambassadors were also vigilant in reporting a range of dirty or physically unsafe conditions. In this respect, ambassador surveillance was valuable to identify areas in need of cleaning due to excessive litter and garbage. On occasion ambassadors would conduct organized garbage blitzes to assess areas in need of maintenance and then clean and record the number of garbage bags collected. In one program ambassadors indicated the areas that they had cleaned by highlighting on a map the exact street-specific path they cleaned in addition to specifying the time they began and finished their route (Interview 15). Beyond litter, ambassadors also reported finding hazardous, physically unsafe types of refuse. Most cases of this type involved various

removable hazards such as dead animals, blood or vomit on a sidewalk/storefront, broken glass from storefronts and beer bottles, human defecation, and used condoms, tampons, diapers and syringes. Other physically unsafe conditions in need of surveillance and reporting involved damaged downtown infrastructure. This included uneven or broken concrete, displaced metal sewer grates or covers, broken street furniture such as public garbage cans, ash urns, benches or bus shelters.

As described in the employee manual, ambassadors were also attentive to persons who were medically incapacitated and potentially posed a danger to themselves or others. A universal feature of all the ambassador programs was the policies regarding incidents involving conscious and unconscious intoxicated individuals. Such policies instructed ambassadors on how to handle and report on medical issues which might escalate to a safety issue if a person responded adversely to offers of help. Depending on the response of the injured subject, the ambassadors were required to put on latex gloves and make visual assessments to determine if the person was breathing, bleeding or sleeping. If the person could not be verbally woken then the ambassadors had to determine if an ambulance was required. If the person was responsive but difficult or presented a physical risk, then it was mandatory to contact the police.

Whenever medical or police authorities were called, ambassadors were required to take note of the name, age, location, and description of the person necessitating the call and the nature of the reported problem. Making detailed observations did not end there; ambassadors were also required to make note of the badge and cruiser number if a situation was attended by police, the ambulance or paramedic identification numbers if medical personnel had attended and the call-to-arrival response time of the support

services. All of the above information was to be prepared and submitted in an incident report upon the ambassadors' return to headquarters. Generally the policy for observing a panhandling situation was very similar to the protocol for intoxicated individuals. Ambassadors had to make note of the incident and be prepared to provide a description of the person in order to make a report (in one instance referred to as Suspect Identification Chart) when they returned to headquarters. Where ambassadors observed an aggressive panhandling incident and perceived an immediate or serious danger, they would report the situation through their radio or phone lines directly to the police or else through their supervisors at ambassador headquarters.

Such protocols were applied by ambassadors on many occasions. Ambassadors reported situations ranging from finding unconscious individuals smelling of alcohol passed out on a sidewalk (Interview 7) to encountering persons they believed to be homeless passed out among empty Listerine mouthwash bottles (Interview 14). In another situation, ambassadors reported observing two intoxicated individuals publicly disrobing in a busy urban park (Interview 14). Before approaching the two women to see if they were in need of medical care, the ambassadors simultaneously contacted headquarters and the police reporting the circumstances. In other situations, ambassadors reported witnessing excessively aggressive panhandlers chasing and following persons across Main Street.

For cases where minor medical assistance was required, ambassadors offered help on many occasions. At various BIA sponsored festivals and events, ambassadors reported sanitizing and bandaging cuts and scrapes of little children (Interview 9). In another instance, ambassadors reported assisting a diabetic with low blood sugar in need of food

or an insulin boost (Interview 10). While ambassadors also attended many minor traffic collisions to determine if medical help was needed, they reported never having to provide medical assistance at the scene.

A final focus of BIA surveillance involves the expectations that ambassadors “assist in the development and on-going maintenance of the [BIA’s] business database” (Manual 3), interview people seeking hospitality assistance, and perform tasks related to measuring the number and working conditions of various downtown infrastructure. Concerning the first issue a major problem for BIAs is keeping their membership database up to date due to the constant flow of businesses opening and closing in the downtown district. Such developments are pertinent to the BIA because current information is needed for levy purposes, to update yearly business directories and to provide more accurate service or shopping recommendations. Accordingly ambassadors are directed to keep an eye out for evidence of new construction or indications that a business has opened, changed management or shut down operations. In this regard ambassadors described approaching new businesses and welcoming them into the BIA. During this time ambassadors would ask for contact information and explain to the new owners the operation of the BIA and their basic duties as a member. If a business was closing down ambassadors would try to speak with the staff to find out when they were closing and take this information back to the BIA to be dealt with by their supervisor or other administration.

In all the operations ambassadors provided on-street hospitality assistance to anyone who approached them for help or otherwise appeared in need of guidance. To assist with this, ambassadors always carried with them pamphlets, maps and downtown

business directories. The distribution of these promotional materials was tracked along with the number of people greeted and helped. For one program this time to meet and provide hospitality information was turned into an opportunity to conduct in-depth, on the spot interviews to gather demographic information about visitors to the downtown. In this program ambassadors had a protocol that involved asking certain questions in the first thirty seconds of the encounter. These questions inquired about the age category of visitors (for example by decade, ie. 19 and under, 20-29, etc.); the city, province or home country of the visitors; their trip length; their specific hotel accommodations; the purpose of their visit to the city; and the purpose to their visit to downtown (Daily Record Sheet 1). Ambassadors also noted any information requested and any referrals given. Following an interview encounter, ambassadors would then walk a short distance out of the hearing range of their interviewee and relay the collected information back to headquarters where an information officer would be waiting to record it on a "daily record" form (Interviews 1, 6). While this practice was generally successful in gathering information, many ambassadors expressed difficulties with this practice. Often ambassadors found it challenging to sustain extended conversation in situations where they had simply been asked for directions, because they were required to continue with their protocol and dig for information that many people found to be invasive and merely were not prepared to provide. At the most busy times, particularly on weekends, when several pairs of ambassadors would be working concurrently, more than one information officer was required to work at headquarters to record the incoming stream of information being sent back by ambassadors.

A further way the ambassadors acted as 'eyes and ears' for the BIA involved being used as workers to gather inventory information on infrastructure in downtown and to conduct surveys on behalf of the BIAs and municipal government. Among ambassadors various surveillance-information related tasks they counted the total number of downtown streetlamps; conducted door-to-door contact information checks for tenants of residential buildings; completed a patio survey for restaurant bars; counted the number of flowerpots and concrete tree planters; and acted as "parking angels" (Interview 10). As parking angels ambassadors were assigned to count the total number of parking meters in the district and to test each one to ascertain if it provided the correct four to five minute timed grace period required by law. If ambassadors were present when a meter would expire, they would insert parking tokens to extend the time. Ambassadors would then record the number of meters plugged and document the locations of any meters lacking the proper grace period. Other times ambassadors were used to deliver or administer surveys to the public or to business owners. One instance of this involved ambassadors delivering surveys which asked member businesses how they were affected by a provincial indoor no-smoking law. In another case ambassadors were used to present and explain a petition to downtown residents to gauge public interest in converting certain one-way streets into two-way streets (Interview 11).

Community services surveillance

Finally, the ambassadors acted as 'eyes and ears' for organizations involved in public health and social services. Ambassadors were relied on to monitor various public health dangers such as dead birds (a surprisingly common difficulty) because of West

Nile Virus or feral animals which posed the risk of rabies. In cases where needles or “sharps” were found, ambassadors were instructed to notify the local environmental health branch or if late at night a needle exchange program (Interview 14; Manual 1). With respect to social services, ambassador programs were often partnered with various outreach programs including food, shelter and mental health services. In most programs ambassadors were given orientation training sessions for dealing with persons with emotional disabilities. In one program ambassadors were used as extra hands for a social outreach program on heat alert days to dispense water bottles and possibly hats, sunscreen and shoes in a local downtown park. While these ambassadors had no problem finding people looking for free water, they had difficulty persuading some people for whom the service was intended for to take the water. In this program ambassadors were provided with cards listing the numbers and addresses of local social services and they were encouraged by their social services trainers to distribute such cards to those appearing in need. In reality, the distribution of cards, hats, sunscreen and shoes was never followed through by ambassadors who found it awkward to have to scrutinize a person and approach them with unsolicited help. However, if first approached about an issue, ambassadors were able to advise about available social services such as shelters, employment services or teen pregnancy centres (Interview 2).

‘Eyes and ears’ as personal skills training

While working as ‘eyes and ears’ surveillance, ambassadors were perceived to develop greater observational skills. Among one program’s employee manual a section entitled ‘Benefits of Being an Ambassador’ lists the ability “to hone new observational

skills” and “be able to predict and understand trends that affect all aspects of downtown” as personal skills to be gained by employment (Manual 3). Despite the adamant denials that ambassadors are a form of security or policing, one supervisor described the policing-related skills gained through being ‘eyes and ears’:

The role of the ambassadors is to be aware of everything that is going around them at all times, just like a police officer. It is the best training for a budding police officer to get because he’s going to be walking a beat; he’s going to make himself familiar with the areas that he’s walking in, so if he sees a light on in a place that doesn’t usually have a light on, something’s going to click. (Interview 10)

This same supervisor later shared that among the program’s ‘success stories’ were at least two former ambassadors that went on to public policing and gained beneficial work experience through their involvement in the program (Interview 10). Similarly, the supervisor of another program (with volunteer-based operations) tacitly admitted that the ambassador role was a logical fit for those people who were pursuing academic studies in policing. Although the program could only advertise gaining community volunteering experience as an incentive for program participation it interestingly labelled the notepad given to its ambassadors as an “evidence notebook”, purposely reminiscent of the language the public police use to characterize their notepads (Interview 3). Although none of the programs endorsed ambassadors acting like police, the role of ambassadors provided individuals who had aspirations of becoming police officers with an opportunity to gain applicable awareness and observation skills. This was true across all ambassador programs studied.

THE COLLECTION AND NODAL TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

Through acting as 'eyes and ears' ambassadors are able to fulfill another primary program duty: to extensively collect statistics and information about the ongoing trends of downtown. One of the most remarkable aspects of ambassador programs is the massive volume and incredible detail of information gathered. Every program indicated that statistical report forms were filled out on a daily basis and compiled at regular intervals. Supervisors describe making official reports on a weekly, monthly, semi-annual and yearly basis. Ambassador programs generally exhibited pride in their record keeping activities.

Ambassador employee manuals all had contained instructions for ambassadors describing how to classify noteworthy incidents into their specific information collection forms. Usually these manual sections contained detailed explanations and definitions of each statistically recorded category. Among the largest and most detailed categories were the explanations which revolved around panhandling incidents. One manual even classified panhandling incidents into three separate categories depending on whether ambassadors provided assistance to citizens, businesses or the panhandlers themselves (Manual 2). Other information designated as 'Safety' included statistics compiled on encountered incidents involving anything from drink or drug violations to gang activities and even fights or assaults. For each of these matters ambassadors were to record not only the number of encounters but also the outcomes of each incident, indicating whether their actions led to police arrest or detention (Manuals 2, 3). While such statistics are rarely released to the public by ambassador programs, one internal report given to this study indicated that a combined total of more than 300 calls were made to police,

emergency services and the city's municipal information directory for the year of 2006 (Information Presentation PowerPoint 1). A more specific breakdown of calls was not available.

Related to cleanliness and beautification this same program reportedly removed 2000 illegally displayed posters, conducted 20 sweeps for illegal graffiti and planted 10 trees around a street intersecting Main Street. For efforts related to infrastructure or hospitality ambassadors completed 15 infrastructure-related surveys, tested or paid into 640 parking meters, distributed over 21,000 brochures, maps or coupons, assisted or interacted with over 40,000 individuals throughout 2006. For this last statistic the ambassador supervisor reportedly adopted a formula to determine the relative cost of each interaction as compared to the total cost of the program. By dividing the dollar amount of the ambassador program by the number of persons assisted and interacted with (referred to as an 'impression') the supervisor developed a cost-per-impression figure across years of operation. Ultimately the collection of these statistics was valuable in proving the program's worth to its various community partners and to the downtown district in general.

The beneficiaries and necessity of knowledge work

After collecting and preparing statistical reports, ambassador supervisors often distributed these documents to their BIA governing boards, to the local police service, and to municipal government officials, including members of city council and senior administration. When asked about the specific reasons or utility of using ambassadors as 'eyes and ears' surveillance and information collectors, the police personnel first evoked

the moral obligations of citizenship. As citizens above all else, ambassadors have a responsibility to report any occurrence they think might be unlawful. Beyond this all police personnel and ambassador supervisors felt ambassadors offered downtowns new stakeholders committed to the expedient reporting of problems which contributed to the safety and business reputation of the downtown. One police representative elaborated on this expressing that the citizens of his downtown are especially apathetic about reporting criminal offences and ambassadors were hopefully a turning point (Interview 17). Another police representative echoed this sentiment as he described a two-fold rationale for the need of ambassadors and their utilization as 'eyes and ears':

Our community motto [is] 'community partners', so we were very interested in any partnership that we could form with our community. And there was a rash of problems in the downtown core and one of the things was we just needed was extra 'eyes and ears'. Over the last hundred years or so there have been less and less people on our streets. A hundred years ago we used to have people that used to sweep the streets - these would be trolley car conductors and more and more people were on the streets as partnered jobs. Now that we've become more mechanized; there are less people out there which means less 'eyes and ears'. (Interview 5)

The first important aspect of this exchange is the indication that the police felt they needed additional assistance and resources to assist them to better respond to an increase in problems. A common facet of modern policing is the perceived lack of means to combat problems and this was conveyed clearly by this statement. Secondly there is the suggestion that certain aspects of policing have traditionally been a communal responsibility and because of a more "mechanized" mentality many previous jobs that encouraged unity and community-mindedness have disappeared leaving the police with less informal or secondary support. As a result the recent trend towards the community policing model (Stenson 1993; O'Malley & Palmer, 1996) is especially relevant: police appear to be encouraging partnerships within the community by forging official

partnerships, particularly with certain groups such as ambassadors. By encouraging partnered organizations to take responsibility and leadership within their community, police appear to be stretching their resources by officially associating with ambassadors. If ambassadors can provide “discreet” surveillance while remaining physically safe, one officer described the partnership as a “win/win situation for everybody” (Interview 17).

When it comes to evaluating the efficacy of ambassadors gathering crime-related information, an interesting finding was that not all the knowledge gained by the ambassadors was useful to the police. Generally the police indicated that the value of ambassadors’ surveillance was derived from its usefulness in leading to immediate action or discernable results. One such example as described by a police representative was the observation of ongoing suspicious activities such as seeing the same person routinely loitering at a given place or time and constantly ducking into an alleyway (Interview 17). In cases like this ambassadors were instructed on how to recognize and report their suspicions of drug dealing and ask for police follow-up. However, when asked about the efficacy of the long term statistical summaries that were compiled from ambassadors’ surveillance, most police representatives claimed to have never personally seen or read such documents. Such long term statistical information was clearly not useful to police services when no immediate action or outcomes were achieved. When questioned about this, one police representative claimed to have looked at the reports “from an analytical perspective” in order to gauge “areas of the city that we’re having more problems with” and consequently “to help direct resources more effectively knowing where our problems were” (Interview 5). However, the ambassador program in that city had the least consistent hours of operation of all ambassador programs studied and this casts real doubt

on the effectiveness that ambassador intelligence may have had in identifying crime hotspots. Furthermore this police representative claimed that ambassadors particularly assisted in identifying problems centered around the late night bar scene; this fact that would seem rather improbable given that the ambassadors' hours of operation extended only to nine p.m., much earlier than when most bar problems tend to occur. On the whole, ambassador surveillance was useful where it led to police action and arrests but had little effect on changing the long-term operations of their partnered police services.

The benefits of ambassadors' knowledge work were also apparent concerning issues related to municipal bylaw enforcement. On many occasions ambassador programs made efforts to contact appropriate city departments to inform them of specific issues they felt were in need of attention. In reference to ambassadors finding and removing illegally posted posters and materials, one ambassador supervisor disclosed that early in the program's operation, attempts were made to establish a line of communication with the city's bylaw enforcement director (Interview 10). In hopes of potentially collaborating with them, the supervisor sent removed posters and collected statistics to the bylaw enforcement office asking for correspondence. However, after a continued lack of response the ambassador program eventually stopped sending these materials. When asked why, the ambassador supervisor stated that it was ultimately "just too costly; they never did anything and it was just a waste of time, you know, gathering, gathering, and sending them off. We just recorded it and threw the posters out" (Interview 10). Efforts to establish a new partnership and working relationship clearly were not always successful.

A final beneficiary of using ambassadors to gather statistical information was the BIA itself, which was always searching for ways to improve the provision of hospitality.

Statistics were valuable in many ways, particularly those which aided the BIA in determining which businesses, services or events piqued the most interest or attracted visitors into the downtown district. With better knowledge, supervisors had the ability to chart dominant trends across time and pass on findings to BIA members for business improvement feedback. Additionally, on-street interviews and statistics obtained through them can be used to produce more operational efficiency by helping ambassador program supervisors determine where and when ambassador assistance is most required and therefore helping to adjust staffing levels. Finally, this collected information could be used to improve training of ambassadors, particularly since during on-street interviews ambassadors typically record questions that they were unable to provide answers for. One program even created a top ten list of the questions most likely to be asked of ambassadors based on previous street interviews and made trainees memorize the answers (Interview 10).

Knowledge work as the ambassadors' raison d'être

One of the ultimate benefits of ambassador-gathered knowledge is that it acts as a primary means to justify the value and accountability of each program's provided funding. By attempting to measure and substantiate their operations through the creation and dissemination of statistical reports, information collection increasingly became the ambassadors' reason for being, as the programs progressed. One group of ambassadors sought to prove their relative impact to business owners within the BIA; to them this involved presenting a list of the number of times a specific restaurant, hotel or business was requested and/or referred. One interesting use of this event-related information was

that ambassador programs tried to use it to attract potential corporate sponsors by describing the visibility and appeal the companies could attract through the public sponsorship of the ambassadors. Although attempts were made, no program ever reported success with this endeavour.

Other ways in which programs demonstrated their impact was by proving to the municipal government or community social services groups how they improved the physical and social landscapes of downtown. One way this came about was through showing the lack of bylaw enforcement or cleanliness shortcomings. One program in particular, which took pride in recording the number of posters taken down, used their results “to show that the bylaw is not being adhered to, and the bylaw enforcement officers are not out there” (Interview 10). By presenting information on the number of illegal posters as well as bags of trash collected, ambassador programs attempted to justify the need for their services to supplement not only the ‘eyes and ears’ of certain municipal government services but also their ‘hands’. To highlight the ways they provided increased safety downtown, ambassador programs pointed to the statistics about calls made to emergency medical or police services. In other cases, ambassadors highlighted their contributions to public safety and public health through the number of dead animals they removed from the street. A further way their value to the community was indicated was through the number of persons ambassadors referred to soup kitchens or other social service programs. Through various statistics they sought to indicate their enhancement of municipal and community services and tried to entrench themselves as an invaluable resource for the downtown area.

The most important group to whom they sought to justify their value was the board of governors who oversaw the program's budget. To prove the fiscal sense of providing an ambassador service, programs catalogued the number of events held with the assistance of ambassadors, the number of man hours put into hosting events, the price this staffing would otherwise cost and the number of times that upcoming event promoters specifically requested ambassador attendance. As one supervisor described, many board members often bombarded her with the query "What have the ambassadors done for me?" a question only satisfactorily answered with results-based proof (Interview 10). It is likely due to this demand that the statistic called cost-per-impression was created to measure the relative effect and efficiency of their program. With such a value, this ambassador program could be compared against itself or other programs on an annual basis. Additional statistics could be used to test if the program was working and achieving what it was supposed to do (Interview 3). If the operation is in need of changes, statistics were useful for recommendation purposes to enhance the next year's program operations and goals (Interview 4). The following supervisor's words succinctly describe the centrality of statistics and accountability: "Anything that they did, as much detail that I could put on paper and record it, I did. So if anybody asked me what they were doing, I was able to show them" (Interview 10).

Additionally one program was so adept at developing statistics it described being directed by its BIA to gather statistics in hopes of persuading the municipal government to enact a new bylaw. This focus of the project was to collect as much detailed information on the extent of the panhandling problem that was being experienced in its downtown. It was hoped that this ambassador generated information would successfully

substantiate a proposal to city council to designate the entirety of the downtown as an anti-panhandling zone. This information, along with a special anti-panhandling task force, was meant to provide a justification to this proposed idea which was later scrapped when the ambassador program made funding and management changes.

CLEAN AND SAFE?

Due to the perception that their downtowns are dirty, unsafe and generally undesirable places to be, the mission statements of all three ambassador programs declare cleanliness and safety as prevailing program goals. For one ambassador program these twin goals are inextricably bound together as the ambassadors are operationally defined as a 'clean and safe' budgetary initiative by its sponsoring BIA. The significance of this is very important especially when it is considered that BIAs formulaically dedicate one-third of their annual budgets towards clean and safe projects (Personal Correspondence 1). Since ambassador programs usually assume the majority of clean and safe budget spending, in well-funded BIAs ambassador operations are potentially accorded a great sum of money.

Many problems that ambassadors assist with are rarely the exclusive domain of 'clean' or 'safe' as separate matters; routinely problems involve both concurrently. For example, by working towards cleanliness goals ambassador programs feel they are not only contributing to a tidy and aesthetically pleasing downtown but are also contributing to a safer district. As a twin concern, the importance of cleanliness and safety was identified by one supervisor who described them as the building blocks for providing good hospitality and an appealing downtown setting:

One of the most important things in anywhere [is] a clean and safe environment for people to come to. It is absolutely necessary because if you don't feel clean and safe you're not going to have a good time, in anywhere you go, in any event that you throw. (Interview 10)

Later in the interview this clean and safe emphasis was underlined further when the supervisor compared the necessity of clean and safe to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. As a foundational requirement clean and safe was assumed to be a base

need through which all other desires - chiefly an environment inviting to consumption - can be achieved (Interview 10). In an intertwined way clean and safe appears to be a rationality through which ambassador programs seek to transform the negative reputations which threaten downtowns.

Clean and safe - the physical and the social

In the most physical sense clean refers to ensuring an environment free from refuse and garbage. As indicated earlier, ambassador programs largely seek to find and remove illegal postings considered “unsightly” in appearance and can potentially strip paint off of light standards consequently damaging the poles (Interview 11). Depending on the type of cleaning, ambassadors used equipment specially provided to them such as heavy-duty gloves, non-penetrable garbage bags, litter pokers and special absorption powder for drying blood or vomit. Garbage either strewn about the curb or overflowing from receptacles creates an unappealing, uninviting impression. An environment with human defecation, vomit, used condoms, diapers and tampons presents the risk of disease or infection. Broken glass, syringes, or hand weapons are hazardous and potentially lethal. Even leaves, snow, and ice pose minor physical risks if allowed to accumulate. All of these aforementioned substances or items were among the materials physically cleaned by ambassadors at one time or another, objects rarely cleaned or encountered by most people in everyday life. Cleaning is such a priority that ambassadors are often assigned to cleaning duties to fill unscheduled or slow periods of the day.

One case in point highlighting the importance for heightened vigilance and the extensive need of cleaning activities was exhibited in one of the ambassador program

cities in the year before the start of this study. During that time one newspaper staff reporter wrote a scathing piece about the excessive trash scattered around downtown on a Sunday morning following a busy Saturday night. After the Monday morning publication of the article the BIA quickly responded with an opinion-editorial column in the paper illuminating the bad timing of the observations and extolling the advances made by the BIA, including the cleaning efforts of the ambassador program (Interview 10). For people who do not inhabit downtowns, negative reports such as the one described often create lasting, harmful impressions. With efforts being made to attract people for shopping and entertainment purposes this example is but one illustration of the way that downtowns are under a microscope of scrutiny. As this particular BIA learned, downtowns are easy subjects to report on and if left unattended physical blemishes like litter and garbage can lead to heavy criticism and a crippled reputation.

Another interpretation of clean alludes to the way that ambassadors' actions contribute to the cleansing of downtown in a social sense. Problems in this respect typically revolve around human behaviour considered to be nuisances and might reflect negatively on the social character of downtown. Relatedly ambassadors have taken notice of and reported on a range of illegal behaviours including prostitution, drug dealing and public drinking. Above and beyond these concerns two problems were targeted as impeding good business in downtown: panhandling and loitering. These two issues together have easily provoked the most attention from ambassadors and BIAs. Regarding panhandling, one supervisor noted "That is one of the biggest problems that we have in the downtown and that's what gives it the perception of being unsafe and not clean, the panhandlers" (Interview 10). In one city, before creating an ambassador program, BIA

executives paid for administrators from the previously mentioned, original Canadian ambassador program to visit their downtown and conduct an informal evaluation on the feasibility of running a successful ambassador operation. These out of town experts reportedly gave glowing reviews of the downtown, opining that an ambassador program would likely be successful. One critique of the downtown was an excessive amount of panhandling. After it was highlighted as an issue by outsiders, panhandling was made a priority by this specific BIA and ambassadors ultimately played a role to discourage this *nuisance activity* (Interview 10).

Ambassador deterrence

The foremost way ambassadors were relied on to counteract nuisance issues was by providing a presence on the street. As outlined in employee handbooks, a core function of the ambassador role was “to help reduce the level of crime and improve safety through the presence of visible uniformed ambassadors” and “provide the public with a source of comfort, elevating a sense of safety for workers, clients, shoppers and tourists” (Manual 3). In all but one interview, ambassadors were described as having a significant presence, usually described in terms of deterring nuisance behaviour. Ambassadors were regarded as a deterrent because they provided an additional adult presence in the downtown. Particularly for one downtown facing serious teen loitering problems, one supervisor described how ambassadors represented a way of showing loiterers “that there is a presence in the downtown; that we are not going to have people intimidating our customers and people who are using our services” (Interview 3). One police representative stated that ambassador presence can be a deterrent strategy because

ambassadors would be seen by loiterers as unwanted company. He noted that by “stand[ing] around them and... making them uncomfortable by your presence” young loiterers “wouldn’t want to be around them [ambassadors] and so we’d move them along, just by their presence. So that was great” (Interview 5). Later in the interview he went on to describe the utility of ambassador presence as a tactic consistent with the philosophy of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Tactics of CPTED usually seek to produce security by preventing and deterring crime or nuisance issues through a patchwork of location-specific methods. As a result the officer compared the ambassadors’ presence to the well-known CPTED strategy of playing classical music outside places where loiterers congregate. Since ambassadors could be present at different hours during the day, were mobile, and could discourage loitering without being “overt and moving them off,” they presented an indispensable security strategy to their BIA (Interview 5).

Related to this, many ambassadors reported they felt as if their presence was a positive influence that was gradually changing the face of downtown by affecting its reputation in two respects. First, it was believed that by seeing young persons walking around and providing a positive service people might not consider downtown as such an inherently dangerous place to be. Such openness to public interaction and availability was thought to boost the morale of downtown and encourage more regular or business-friendly use by the general public (Interview 14). Second, ambassadors were seen by some as a role model in a certain sense: as a clean cut, young adult workforce combating the community perception that people of the ‘kiddie bar’ crowd were ruining the

downtown's reputation (Interview 10). In this minor way ambassadors seemed to offset stereotypes about a downtown perceived to be oriented to younger drinking crowds.

An additional reason why ambassadors provided presence and deterrence is owed to the fact that uniforms were worn. While wearing matching, brightly coloured clothing and patrolling in pairs on foot, ambassadors were extremely visible downtown and from their experiences this was perceived as a deterrent. Ambassadors usually recognized that any potential deterrent effect generated by their uniforms could be attributed to perceptions that they were some type of civil authority or even a wing of the public police. If directly asked ambassadors would unconditionally deny being a member of the public police. If they perceived such a link to be advantageous to accomplishing a goal ambassadors would not go out of their way to clear misconceptions about who they are.

At one of the downtown stores we would go in and do a walk-through because they have a lot of theft issues but they don't employ security. ...The management loved it because it was a deterrent to anybody who might think "Oh shit, there's some guy in a uniform." Once they see that you're in uniform they just process the fact that you're a cop automatically. (Interview 7)

If it meant someone on the street might be "less likely to do something in front of us" ambassadors typically did not mind others mistaking them for public police (Interview 7).

To limit such mistakes, and prior to giving police approval, a police representative of one city had discussions with administrators of the ambassador program demanding certain uniform restrictions. The primary demand made by the police was that ambassadors would not be allowed to wear any style of shirt appearing authoritative or similar in style or colour to that worn by public police officers or private security persons. To counter this concern another program went so far as to instruct ambassadors in their employee manuals that they are not police officers and "should never leave anyone with

the impression that they are or they may be subject to criminal charges for impersonating a police officer” (Manual 2). Despite these efforts ambassadors appeared to maximize the power of wearing a uniform.

Although granted the perceptions of authority by some, ambassadors reported a few instances in which their capacity for deterrence was limited. In situations involving drug deals, while the ambassadors felt their presence made the participants more cautious, overall they recognized that potential drug transactions could easily be displaced to a new location or simply delayed until ambassadors passed by (Interviews 7, 15). Another limitation involved particularly aggressive panhandlers who were even known to approach ambassadors for a hand out. In such cases ambassadors ultimately realized that if public police presence had no inhibiting effect on certain panhandlers, then ambassador presence would not make any difference either.

Checking doors and safety escorts

Other ways that ambassadors were used to support the clean and safe mentality were by conducting door checks on downtown businesses and escorting persons to their vehicles. For door checks, ambassadors patrolling the downtown would take time to check the front and back doors of businesses for unlocked or unsecured doors (Manual 2). In the few instances that unlocked doors were found, ambassadors contacted headquarters to make calls to the building’s owner as well as the police who would come and assess the situation to ensure that the building was secure. While ambassadors did not seem to mind the practice of conducting door checks, one lamented that ambassadors would not have to check doors if the public police had more officers on the street

patrolling and checking doors themselves as in years past (Interview 7). From a business and loss-prevention perspective, ambassadors were ensuring the safety of business goods and preventing financial loss.

For safe-walk services one ambassador program made its patrolling pairs available on request to anyone wanting to be escorted to the parking lot or garage where his or her vehicle was located (Manual 3, Personal Correspondence 2). Despite this service being openly available to the public, it was more likely to be used by employees within the downtown rather than tourists, especially since tourists would not likely know about the availability of such assistance. The feasibility of such a program might be questioned because ambassadors typically worked limited late-night hours. Additionally, a risk the BIA took by advertising such a safety program was the implicit suggestion that such a service was needed and that there is a safety problem in the downtown. With safety being a primary concern of downtowns, inferring such a problem would be the last thing desired by ambassador programs. For unknown reasons, a few years into operations the BIA offering a safe-walk service later reduced the funding of their ambassador program and subsequently cancelled the service.

Creating safety through media relations

One surprising way that ambassadors appeared to promoted the clean and safe mentality was through media interviews. A common feature of all ambassador programs is the recognition that ambassadors must be prepared to handle various types of public relations. Although all programs give basic instructions on public relations procedures, one program dedicates over two and a half pages of the employee manual to detailing

how to handle interviews as well as the types of interviews in which they might be asked to participate. Part of this specific program's instruction involves how to avoid being misinterpreted by the interviewer. For instance, it advises ambassadors to keep interview responses from "five to fifteen seconds long" and to "resist the urge to elaborate" if the interviewer is silent following a response, lest they risk having their answers be taken out of context or distorted (Manual 3). However, another part of media relations training deals with how best to 'spin' their responses to create the perception of a safe downtown. Such instructions go beyond telling ambassadors how to protect themselves from misinterpretation to actually telling them what they ought to imply in their responses:

In your answers, your first-person testimonial about what you see and do should support the fact that Downtown is a safe place to visit, you don't necessarily need to say the word "safe," let the reporter make that conclusion based on your comments, it will come through much stronger in the story if it's an observed fact, rather than a direct quote from you.
(Manual 3)

By preparing ambassadors with this mentality, interviews are seen as opportunities to advance the agenda of clean and safe and 'help' interviewers conclude that the downtown is safe for consumption. In this way ambassadors appear to operate not only through physically working towards safety but also through affecting perceptions of safety in media presentations.

Ambassadors: personally clean and safe?

Besides being goals of the ambassador program at large, clean and safe were also requirements for ambassadors on a personal level. Regarding the issue of clean, all ambassadors were required to abide by uniform policies that covered all aspects of appearance. All ambassadors were required to abide by clothing policies prohibiting them

from wearing anything but officially sanctioned ambassador uniforms. In addition ambassadors were governed by policies which prohibited personal jewellery (dangling chains, earrings, bracelets, lip or eyebrow hoops and studs) as well as specific nail and hair conditions (false nails, nail polish, dirty nails; hair extensions, untied hair past the shoulders, facial hair) (Manual 3). Since image was a priority for ambassadors all appearances are seen as potentially important public relations opportunities.

Personal safety was a matter of concern for the ambassadors as well. To ensure personal safety certain procedures and training instruction was provided across all ambassador operations. The first and foremost safety procedure was the rule that all ambassadors should always work in pairs, in close vicinity of each other (except while doing cleaning) and preferably each pair should be made up of one male and one female. Depending on the program, ambassadors are usually provided with some personal safety training. In two cases this involved attending personal safety seminars offered through their partnered police service, and in the other case role playing and brainstorming sessions were used to prepare ambassadors for the possible problems they might encounter. In two programs with elements of police training or orientations, ambassadors were taught about verbal confrontation management and shown videos on how to deflect or defuse verbal abuse. To further facilitate ambassadors' safety, one program reduced its late-night hours of operation to nine p.m. from eleven p.m.

In spite of this preparation ambassadors reported witnessing or experiencing first hand a number of personal safety incidents. By and large, a disproportionate number of incidents including verbal or physical assaults occurred on female ambassadors, particularly in situations with female-female pairings. Usually ambassador programs did

not have the resources to consistently staff male-female pairs. Ambassadors faced problems from three general groups: adult 'street persons' with mental disturbances, groups of young persons hanging out and adult bar patrons sitting on outdoor patios adjacent to public sidewalks.

On more than one occasion female ambassadors reported that they were followed around by persons they believed were emotionally disturbed. One female ambassador reported that she was once followed back to the ambassador headquarters and presented with a drawing provided by the person as a gift (Interview 13). In another situation a male ambassador reported that an emotionally disturbed person approached his female partner while they were separated when cleaning garbage, screamed in her face and then scattered the contents of her bag around the street (Interview 14). A further case reported by an ambassador involved a homeless person with mental health issues approaching her partner at a stationary information kiosk and kissing her on the face (Interview 15). Finally some ambassadors reported uneasiness between themselves and 'street people' who accused them of being undercover police officers. Due to the perception that ambassadors were really undercover narcotic officers, they were sometimes called 'Narcs' and even reported receiving death threats on occasion (Interviews 2, 14, 15).

At other times an ambassador reported being intimidated when cleaning garbage near a group of youths who were staring at her intently (Interview 2). One supervisor told a story of two female ambassadors who were working at a BIA sponsored festival and reported a group of young adult males making verbal, sexual invitations and advances towards them at their stationary information table near the edge of a park (Interview 4). After the ambassadors rejected their invitations the group would not leave them alone and

kept approaching them. In the end the police were called and the ambassador supervisor had to cancel the remaining hours of the shift. In other situations ambassadors told about being occasionally harassed with sexually inappropriate comments from outdoor patio bar customers. Different ambassadors reported being gawked at and spoken to in a vulgar way by persons more than twice their age calling at them over the railings separating the patio area from the public sidewalks (Interviews 12, 13).

While most incidents occurred against females, male ambassadors also faced occasional incidents. In the first few weeks of the summer season one male reported facing repeated taunts by persons aggressively trying to provoke him. To defuse the situations he described his strategy of acting as polite as he possible could to his provokers and if they persisted then simply ignoring the persons. He stated that, "if you don't defend yourself... they'll just get bored of you because then ambassadors provided no amusement for them" (Interview 14). As well, in another program a supervisor recounted an incident where a male-male team of ambassadors faced homophobic taunts by a group of young adults visiting out-of-town. Due to the small number of male ambassadors and the generally perceived lack of approachability of a male-male team, the program never used an all-male pairing again (Interview 10).

One informal strategy developed by some ambassadors to avoid uncomfortable situations was using their radio or cell phones to call their partner as they were doing cleaning duties and were temporarily separated in a city block or park area. If it appeared that one partner was engaged in an uncomfortable conversation, the ambassador partner would call and create a diversion therefore giving the engaged person a reason to excuse him or herself. Similarly ambassadors also reported feigning the vibration of an incoming

call as a reason to break off unwanted discussions. Since one ambassador claimed that many homeless persons in the downtown were lonely and regularly looked for opportunities to tell their life stories, such escape strategies were a creative use of their communication systems (Interview 2).

LAW INVOCATION

An additional way that ambassadors were involved in the provision of governance is in the way that they inconspicuously invoke laws and provide a degree of enforcement. As a lesser known activity in many programs, ambassadors reported times when they openly asked people to either stop what they were doing or to move on, invoking some knowledge of legal regulations. The majority of laws known and invoked by the ambassadors tended to involve nuisance-based issues perceived to be offensive to the business community. Among these were municipal bylaws relating to illegal postings; skateboarding, bicycling, and rollerblading on a public sidewalk; loitering; smoking near entrances; spitting; littering; and garbage zoning bylaws. It appears that ambassadors generally learned about these bylaws from training related to 'eyes and ears' surveillance and from informal discussions with other ambassadors or their supervisor. One police representative described briefly teaching two provincial laws (the *Trespass to Property Act* and *Safe Streets Act*) to ambassadors (Interview 5) but when ambassadors from his city were asked about them they disputed this claim (Interviews 7, 8). Despite not knowing about any specific anti-panhandling legislation all programs recognized the illegality of behaviours used by aggressive panhandlers.

Interestingly, however, ambassadors did not consider asserting the illegality of behaviours or threatening to contact legal authorities to be acts of enforcement. When asked if they invoke or enforce law ambassadors and supervisors openly state that they do not consider ambassadors to be enforcers of any type and that such actions were not within their realm of duties. Nevertheless, later in interviews when specific types of nuisances were discussed, strategies and measures associated with invocation and

enforcement were invariably mentioned as methods to deal with the problem. It is likely that many factors discussed in the next section have contributed to this contradictory opinion.

Invoking strategies

Although ambassadors were able to discern when a variety of laws were broken, they usually lacked specific information such as the official name or intricate details of those laws. Since the ambassadors did not consider themselves to be any type of enforcement or authority, they indicated no need or desire to learn the specific names and details of laws. Simply being able to identify which behaviours were law-infringing seemed to suffice alerting someone's attention to his or her violation. When asked about the approaches they took to tell people to stop doing prohibited activities, ambassadors were very careful in their wording. A consistent feature across programs was that ambassadors used a variation of the word 'law' within the first few words of a sentence when speaking to a person they felt had broken a law. Simply by saying "By law you're not allowed..." or "There's a bylaw..." ambassadors were able to achieve compliance in various situations. When asked if she considered this to be enforcement one ambassador replied that she was not enforcing it on an offending person, "just notifying them" that "you could get fined if you do that" (Interview 13). She further explained that she was always sure to never indicate that she had the power to personally fine someone clarifying that "we're not saying that we could do it because obviously we can't but if the City did it then they could [get fined]" (Interview 13). One thing that worked in favour of ambassadors was the public's general lack of knowledge about who had the authority to

enforce bylaws and what bylaw enforcement officers might look like. Just the act of indicating a bylaw infringement likely gave the impression that an ambassador was a bylaw enforcement officer.

Ambassadors reported seeking compliance with law through simply being polite. In such cases ambassadors reported courteously asking people to relocate (“Can you not do this here? Can you stop?” [Interview 13]), or else spoke apologetically as if their requests were not to be taken as anything personal (“We’re really sorry but you know you’re not allowed to do this. Just legally you can’t do this” [Interview 6]). Ambassadors were usually cognizant of not seeking compliance through coarse or authoritarian-like orders associated with the police. With this in mind ambassadors avoided commands like ‘move it’, ‘move on’ or ‘get off the sidewalk’ which would likely have prompted a hostile response. Ambassadors were always concerned about encountering someone in a particularly combative mood or an emotionally disturbed person who might pose a physical risk.

Discretion

One factor affecting an ambassador’s decision-making about invoking laws was their discretion. In practice ambassadors indicated that they used discretion when deciding which bylaws were appropriate to invoke. In most cases ambassadors did not concern themselves with invoking many of the known bylaws. Issues like spitting, smoking near building entrances, improper removal of garbage bags and littering were not considered priorities and as a result went generally unenforced. Ambassadors instead

concerned themselves with issues they considered to be more physically or socially problematic such as illegal posting, sidewalk infractions and panhandling behaviours.

Ambassador discretion was also apparent in their choice of when to invoke the bylaws they chose. When they took action often depended on the perceived intensity of the problem along with their degree of concern over personal safety. One ambassador expressed that deciding whether to invoke law was a judgment call when she remarked “if you felt it was being a problem then you might want to say something, but if you don’t want to you don’t have to” (Interview 8). With good observation skills and knowledge of the regular characters of their downtown district, ambassadors often knew with whom or where they might encounter problems. As a result ambassadors used their discretion partially based on a person’s reputation or previous behaviour to gauge their current level of perceived harmfulness.

Police and supervisor apprehension

Police representatives were questioned about the potential of ambassadors invoking law for nuisance issues and all articulated they were entirely against ambassadors undertaking legal enforcement. One police officer made it clear that ambassadors were “not to engage anybody that they may have perceived to have been committing any type of criminal act... not even to approach a situation that, in their opinion, could be a criminal act” (Interview 16). In the following excerpt the same officer elaborated this sentiment further:

Q: Would that also include any less serious crimes like nuisance issues such as panhandling?

A: Yes. And again, those issues may seem insignificant... but for persons who do not have the authority to engage a panhandler or to engage

somebody else who's committing perhaps even inappropriate behaviour does not mean that that cannot escalate into a more serious situation... They're not trained for it; it's not their mandate to deal with those situations. If they see something like that, call the police and let us engage those people; that's what we're trained to do. (Interview 16)

A different police representative affirmed this message when he stated that ambassadors were not fully aware of the degree of physical and health dangers to which they would be subjected if they tried moving persons on, especially due to the weapons and diseases on the street (Interview 17). A final point emphasized by all police representatives was that ambassadors did not have legally prescribed authority to engage persons and therefore they lacked the capability to properly deal with nuisance problems. One response succinctly captured this sentiment:

Once someone calls bullshit on you, you can't back down. So if you tell somebody to move along, and they say "We're not moving - you don't have the authority to move us", and you don't, now what do you do? And now you've really lost any of your [pause] ... right? (Interview 5)

From the public police perspective, ambassadors' assistance was unwanted and inappropriate. The police felt ambassadors were utterly overstepping their boundaries if they took action without the legal authority to do so.

Physical safety issues and overstepping boundaries were also concerns of ambassador supervisors. When asked about ambassadors potentially invoking bylaws, supervisors generally supported the police directives about non-intervention. They emphasized a lack of authority compared to the public police as well as potential safety or BIA liability and risks that might result if ambassadors were injured in an incident. Despite this, one supervisor admitted to encouraging ambassadors to invoke law. She stated she knew her ambassadors very well and trusted them to use common sense when making decisions. She indicated ambassadors knew to never put themselves in danger

and approach situations with cautious judgment. She specifically instructed her ambassadors to be direct and brief in their encounters with nuisance people, saying simple phrases like: "You are panhandling. Move on" (Interview 10).³

Overall invoking law or encouraging people to cease their behaviour was not uncommon. Ambassadors in two of the three programs studied admitted invoking law and while no one in the third program invoked law, one ambassador claimed that although she never invoked any laws, she never felt it necessary to either. Yet such duties are not part of the job description or listed in ambassador employee manuals. Given the claims of the ambassadors and the stated positions of supervisors there appears to be a significant contradiction. Nonetheless it is clear that invoking was an off the record, generally informal function. There were not any hard and fast rules governing this function especially with ambassadors using discretion about where and when to invoke.

Failures and successes

Notwithstanding the validity, safety concerns or lack of official endorsement of this activity, ambassadors generally reported moderate results from invoking law and ultimately no incidents of physical harm. The success of invoking any given law appeared to be dependent on the type of problem being addressed. For panhandling, ambassadors found themselves often ineffective. They encountered panhandlers unfazed by anything they said to them including their insistence to move. Ambassadors were effective when they knew who the regulars were and the places they panhandled. Ambassadors often had nicknames for habitual panhandlers relating to a prominent trait or well-known incident they were involved in. When visitors complained about

panhandlers, ambassadors could usually determine who the perpetrator was by the location where it occurred and a fact or two about the person's physical description. Ultimately ambassadors understood the nature of panhandling and the difficulty the police had with addressing the problem. For the most part, ambassadors reasoned that if the police could not prevent or curb the problem then any different results could not be reasonably expected from their efforts (Interviews 6, 13).

Concerning illegal postings, ambassadors found more success when invoking law. Ambassadors reported actually stopping people in the process of taping up advertisements, stickers and promotional flyers. After telling them that posting was against a bylaw, some people posting heeded the warning and stopped; however, others were indifferent and continued to post. In some cases ambassadors described following those posting down the street and removing each posting one by one behind them (Interview 9). For chronic posting violators supervisors would sometimes get involved. In cases where ambassadors reported taking down excessive numbers of a certain poster or had problems with posters representing a certain group or business, one supervisor personally called the offending party and invoked the bylaw over the phone (Interview 10).

Aside from these two problems the majority of ambassador law-invoking involved persons bicycling or skateboarding on sidewalks. People performing skate and bike tricks on sidewalks were deemed to be a source of social irritation and potential damage to sidewalks and city infrastructure like steps and curbs. Understanding that many people using sidewalks in this way were younger persons, ambassadors tried to seek compliance through politeness and trying to "talk to them on their level" (Interviews

6, 7). This coincided with a common ambassador position that positive communication was the best way to handle problems. One example of this was when an ambassador recalled one instance when he encountered youths skateboarding all about the downtown area he was patrolling. First he politely reminded them that the sidewalk was not a skateboard park. Then he recommended to them where such a park could be found and proceeded to ask them to take their skateboarding off the sidewalk. Perhaps due to experience this ambassador described how a more strict or negative communication like 'get off' would result in a defiant reaction because "now he's going to go down along the sidewalk 5 feet then jump back on to the sidewalk just to piss you off, or just to say 'What are you going to do to me?'" (Interview 7). Ambassadors were more likely to attain compliance when law was invoked or persons were asked to move in respectful tones using clear messages. Even though ambassadors still reported getting cursed at occasionally while invoking these bylaws, they thought that communication was the key to attaining compliance.

Apart from straightforwardly invoking law and notifying people about potential repercussions, ambassadors in one program developed a few alternative strategies to deal with nuisance behaviour. For problems like panhandling, ambassadors developed a unique tactic: they talked to the person who was the target of the panhandling in an attempt to thwart the panhandler's requests. The ambassadors and their supervisor described this as 'educating' the people involved. They would try to discourage panhandling by expressing to the panhandler's target a message such as "Please don't, he's a regular" (Interviews 6, 10, 12, 13). By informing the public that they did not have to 'pay the toll', the ambassadors were thwarting the panhandler's efforts. Moreover the

ambassadors would explain to the targets that downtown had many soup kitchens and appropriate services for people in need and advise them about the problems they would be advancing if they gave to the panhandler. Ambassadors found this route as an easier and more effective method of alleviating panhandling than perpetually asking the panhandler to stop. Where ambassadors had a chance to speak with panhandlers, attempts would also be made to educate and direct them to local social services.

A further way of contesting nuisance issues involved a creative strategy of using the ambassador communication system as a mechanism of deterrence. As one supervisor remarked "nuisance-wise... their best weapon, their best tool to exert authority was that radio" (Interview 10). In an instance where ambassadors encountered younger skateboarders being bullied off of a downtown skateboarding spot by teenagers, the supervisor described telling the ambassadors to key in to headquarters and:

"Call it in. They don't know who you're calling it in to. So you sound official and sayAmbassador to Base. What is Base? Especially to kids that are harassing, the skateboarders or whatever, or to panhandlers or whatever it's Ambassador-to-Base, Ambassador-to-Base... "You'd better leave or you will be reported. I am reporting you right now. Ambassador-to-Base." Boom! Boom! Gone! It worked like magic. There was never a situation that escalated to where we needed to call the police and that is why I can say it was a [valuable] method of deterring. (Interview 10)

In this way ambassadors were exploiting the misconceptions that others had of them on the street. By wearing a uniform, patrolling in pairs and using radio or radio-related communication systems, ambassadors took advantage of the ignorance of others. They purposefully mislead to deter perceived nuisances and it appears to have been highly effective.

As an offshoot of this, ambassadors also attempted to deter by keying into headquarters with their radios and loudly requesting police assistance. One ambassador

reported not even turning on his radio or keying into headquarters to strike fear into people, saying: "the minute you said on the radio maybe 'Call the police', they were afraid... whenever they heard that they used to take off. And, that was that" (Interview 9). As a result of feigning calls to an authority at "home base" or at the local police this program really did see its ambassadors make the most of their radios and contribute to the goal of nuisance deterrence. While different from straightforwardly invoking law, these strategies nevertheless helped ambassadors to remove certain problems at certain times in the downtown.

INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC POLICE

A central objective of this research was to assess the working relationship between ambassadors and the public police. By and large this relationship was not as collaborative as expected. Evidence of some internodal collaboration was found in many activities that one group performed for the benefit of the other. Ambassadors provided 'eyes and ears' surveillance for the police and were listed as being either official partners or positively affiliated with the local police service. Statistical reports of gathered intelligence were created and sent to local police services, whom may or may not have acted upon them. The public police provided their corporate approval for the ambassador programs which was an antecedent to establishing operations. The police also provided varying amounts of formal and informal training to ambassadors and occasionally consulted with supervisors before special events or circumstances. Taken as a whole this interaction indicates how their relationship was mutually beneficial.

Conversely the practical scope of this relationship between groups was rather small. In most cases training was relatively brief, lasting only one day or consisting of a small number of evening seminars. Most police involved in this training indicated that it was provided voluntarily by the police service and they considered it to be a "one-off deal" (Interview 17). Aside from briefly addressing the ambassadors and providing them with information before major events, the police did not have regular meetings or consultations with the ambassadors. As one police representative stated most officers had an arm's length relationship with ambassadors typically having no day-to-day interactions with police (Interview 5). Ambassadors had no special contact number for the police services either. In cases of emergency, ambassadors used the standard

emergency phone numbers as the general public would, although one program suggested that they may have had priority in police response to their calls. Generally the police had no oversight of the program and consequently felt no special responsibility to the supervisors or to the program.

Ambassador supervisors commonly experienced better rapport and stronger connection with the police representatives than ambassadors did. At the start of the summer season supervisors usually had some interaction with police to coordinate training, sometimes involving a few calls and several emails. Beyond this, the supervisor-police dealings were also limited. Supervisors reported no regular or significant exchange of information with their police service associates aside from the occasional consultations being made on an on-call basis. Regarding the ambassador-police relationship, all of the supervisors believed that ambassadors were viewed positively by the beat patrol officers.

When questioned themselves about their relationship with the police, ambassadors reported two general outlooks. Some expressed a friendly but distant acquaintance with the downtown beat officers. In these cases ambassadors reported greeting or waving at police personnel whenever they were encountered, just as they would any other persons on the street. Another view of the police was more negative. A number of ambassadors reflected that when they reported certain crimes or issues to the police, particular officers would not take any action. These ambassadors assumed that the police officers were too lenient or would not take action unless they saw the problem themselves. Other ambassadors lamented that the downtown beat patrol lacked sufficient street visibility and one claimed to always see a number of them hanging out in the back of restaurants or cafes when he would be out on patrol (Interview 9). One ambassador who later on joined

the local police service provided an especially interesting outlook on the police-ambassador relationship. After he first joined the police service he recalled being initially recognized and ridiculed by some officers as the “idiot in the coloured jacket” from his days wearing the ambassador uniform (Interview 7). This lack of respect was apparent to other ambassadors as well who reported being generally disregarded by police and feeling police considered them to be “stepping on their toes” (Interview 8) and intruding on their policing territory.

GROWTH AND FAILURE

Late in the process of conducting this research two interesting developments occurred. First it was learned that at least two new ambassador programs were being initiated elsewhere in the province. Secondly it was discovered that two of the programs being studied were shutting down their operations. The first program shutting down was one run exclusively on a volunteer basis. The supervisor stated that the program had "run its course" and was no longer viable or needed (Interview 3). When probed further, the supervisor explained that at the outset of operations a high number of initial volunteers helped buoy the program. Later, as many graduated from their post-secondary education, fulfilled their required numbers of hours, or pursued other volunteer experiences, the program struggled to attract new ambassadors. As the number of ambassadors gradually waned, it got to the point where not all shifts were covered and consistent operations were difficult. Another problem was that in the summer time many ambassadors were not available due to paid summer employment or vacation plans. Finally the supervisor declared that due to the recent implementation of the closed circuit television camera surveillance the BIA felt there were fewer nuisance and vandalism problems in the downtown and as a result decided that ambassadors were no longer needed (Interview 3).

In the second program the ambassador supervisor indicated prior to the interview that funding had been cut for the program and that the BIA was going to use the money towards a variety of minor BIA expenditures (Interview 11). A precursor to that decision occurred two years previously when the BIA formed a special task force to evaluate the effectiveness of the ambassador program. A main subject of contention was whether ambassadors were accomplishing what they were meant to accomplish, a query that

pointed to the ambassador program's shift away from a security focus towards a greater focus on hospitality (Interview 11). In the two years following the task force evaluation, adjustments to the program were made, particularly in reducing the hours of ambassador operation both in the busy summer period and throughout the rest of the year. As well, the ambassadors had to perform greater amounts of cleaning, an activity some personally felt was being done just to "grasp something to keep the program going" (Interview 13). Some ambassadors who had worked in this program were annoyed with the BIA board of governors for their perceived shortchanging of ambassadors in terms of resources while having unrealistically high expectations for the program. One ambassador described an unrealistic board plan that called on ambassadors to create and administer detailed tours of the downtown which could be made into attractions for local elementary school classes and be advertised on websites and brochures (Interview 6). Other proposals which never came to fruition included encouraging ambassadors to patrol the streets wearing themed-specific clothing such as Santa hats and beards in winter or performing card or juggling tricks like buskers to entertain the public in the summer (Interview 10). Many ambassadors who were post-secondary students working for minimum wages felt that becoming a street entertainer was beyond the scope of their duties and that the board members had not given them the tools or time to make the great difference and impact they were expecting.

The third program studied also encountered initial difficulties which led to a change in the administering organization in the second year of its operation. In the first year of operation, the program had a very security-minded mentality and this led to a very "disastrous year" (Interview 15). The administrators had envisioned the program

operating more closely to the original out-of-province model and recruited its ambassadors from local criminology, policing and criminal justice students. However, during this first year certain ambassadors developed a chummy, 'personal' relationship with some downtown beat police officers. Although not institutionally sanctioned, these ambassadors eventually overstepped their boundaries and participated in numerous "take-downs" and physical altercations alongside the police. As a result of these ambassadors getting "far too deep into the whole policing aspect" (Interview 17), in the following year the program changed administering organizations and sought to move away from a policing reputation. In the second year the new organization retooled the program with an emphasis on hospitality and avoided rehiring any of the ambassadors employed in the first year.

6. CONCLUSION

Within cities and major urban spaces, a key component of population governance involves the implementation of security provision. In the context of downtown, security and other governing functions are performed by a variety of parties and operate according to a multiplicity of rationalities (Johnston, 1999: 179). Driving this security and governance in a select but growing number of downtowns are ambassador programs, initiatives meant to support the profitability of downtown businesses by encouraging consumption through cleanliness and safety. However, as a relatively new phenomenon, ambassadors have never been comprehensively researched. In particular, their implications for safety and other forms of governance were unknown. As a result, this study has aimed to thoroughly examine ambassadors and assess the potential security and governance implications inherent in such a program. To do this, the conduct of ambassadors has been explored to determine the degree to which they fulfill the common practices that define contemporary policing and governing agencies - particularly surveillance, knowledge collection and law invocation or enforcement.⁴ This study sought to reveal if ambassador programs support partnerships with other governing agencies and assess to what degree they reflect dominant mentalities and discourses currently shaping downtowns.

As Lyon (2001) has pointed out, modernity is characterized by the growth of surveillance. This observation is epitomized in downtowns which are always seeking ways to create transparent and unimpeded space. One aspect of the ambassador role is surveillance. As mobile 'eyes and ears', ambassadors provide an ideal way to scrutinize downtowns. Whether out on regular patrol or assisting tourists, ambassadors always have

a constant vigilance for crime and nuisance problems. Given this mobility they make for a unique form of surveillance in a Western urban environment. As a human surveillance technology ambassadors demonstrate the depths and evolving character of surveillance. Unlike closed circuit television surveillance which can be found in the downtown districts of each of the studied cities, ambassadors have a greater capacity to select who and where to turn their attention and react promptly if necessary. As described earlier ambassadors are most conscientious of their urban downtown landscapes in terms of behaviours or signs of disorder which would be deemed undesirable to a business order. By their unassuming surveillance ambassadors map downtowns for aesthetic and security objectives, consequently enhancing their potential for profitability.

A further element signifying the policing character of ambassadors is the use of surveillance to collect statistics and general intelligence about the downtown. With such information ambassador programs can create knowledge about distinctive tendencies in the downtown. Ambassador-created knowledge could be used as capital to support other nodal interests. One case in point was the documentation of drug deals and distribution of this knowledge to the police. Since many in the policing industry characterize knowledge 'as a weapon' in the routine fight against crime (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997: 134) ambassador intelligence of criminal activities is potentially valuable to the police, particularly tactical information that could be immediately acted on. Sponsoring BIAs and ambassador programs themselves also benefited from increased knowledge. With information about the number of visitors and their consumer preferences, ambassadors could be better used to improve consumption throughout the downtown district. Cost-per-impression values generated through collected statistics served as a way to measure the

ambassadors' impact in a financially based way providing accountability that could be neatly packaged. Other nodes such as municipal governments and public health organizations also benefited from ambassador surveillance in cases where ambassadors reported damage to physical infrastructure, or dead animals. Through surveillance ambassadors established themselves as an integrated albeit minor centre of information collection and in doing so increased knowledge about the downtown.

Through their direct activities ambassadors governed through a clean and safe mentality. Under an assumption that "clean streets contribute to the goal of safe streets" (Greene et al. 1995: 14) ambassadors fulfilled a clean and safe agenda in both a physical and social sense. To entice patrons to visit the city centre, ambassadors quite literally ensured their downtowns were physically 'clean' by performing tasks like removing postings, cleaning litter, and washing blood or vomit from sidewalks. Further underscoring the need for a tidy and orderly downtown, one program and its governing organization came under criticism from a newspaper columnist about the lack of cleanliness downtown. By quickly and vehemently retorting that downtown is a clean place to shop, live and work, the governing organization attempted to save the downtown's physical reputation.

More controversially the clean and safe mentality governed in a social sense. Ambassadors themselves improved the quality of life downtown, by adding to the aesthetic environment. With stringent restrictions on personal appearance, ambassadors existed as clean-cut 'human signs' of order in downtown. As a positive presence ambassadors were useful to affect the day-to-day social reputation of downtown. This was particularly useful to counteract sentiments that young adults were parasitic to the

good character of downtown through their hedonist indulgence in the nighttime economy (Lippert, 2007). Also part of this image management was the public expression of safety that ambassadors were instructed to 'spin' in media interviews. Without a safe social reputation it is assumed that downtowns cannot become ideal zones of consumption.

Another way ambassadors ensured clean and safe was by securitizing downtown spaces through the removal of persons seen as 'urban blight' (Valverde, 2005). With salience towards persons believed to be nuisances or responsible for disorder, ambassadors play a direct role in the social reorganization of space (Ruppert, 2006). As part of a renewed effort to police nuisances, ambassadors attempt to create security through the absence of difference. One significant way that this security was achieved was through the uniformed ambassadors' patrolling of the downtown. Owing to the fact that some people were mistaking them for police, ambassadors provided deterrence and often exploited the ignorance of others to the benefit of their goals. As a relatively low paid workforce they proved to be a cheap form of security presence. Consistent with the contention that the emerging market of security is increasingly reliant on deterrence produced by visible patrolling (Crawford & Lister, 2004), it appears that the adult presence and patrols of uniformed ambassadors were deemed to be valuable as a deterrent strategy.

Comparable to such deterrence was the ambassador practice of invoking law to eliminate certain types of nuisance behaviour. Two behaviours, loitering and panhandling, were seen as detrimental to the efforts to promote downtown as a secure and welcoming environment. Typically invoking bylaws, ambassadors often tried asking for compliance with their requests in a polite and respectful manner. They usually used

some variant of the actual word 'law' because it was more serious or official sounding. The effect of ambassadors invoking 'law' appears to be analogous to Hermer's (1997) description of police in the city of Oshawa using the 'magic word' to infer legal consequences to the violators of nuisance bylaws (192). Mindful of the number of emotionally disturbed and aggressive people on the street, ambassadors typically avoided commanding people to move on or move along.

One strategy used to prevent panhandling was to force panhandlers out of business by asking people in the area being targeted to resist giving money to them because of the social harm it causes. Another approach to nuisance prevention involved ambassadors using their radios as a means to deter persons by threat of immediate police contact. Whether pretending to call a home base 'authority' or feigning police radio contact, ambassadors used their radios as a device to frighten away persons committing nuisance behaviour. In this vein, ambassadors' radios as well as their street smarts and uniforms seemed to be veritable tools in their policing 'tool kit' from which to draw benefits (Mopas & Stenning, 2001: 69). While the way ambassadors used these 'tool kits' varied across programs, it was clear that they typically capitalized on the public imagery of security officers. Similar to modern forms of private security, ambassadors found ways to achieve their goals of curbing nuisance behaviours by using "less overtly coercive tools" (Mopas & Stenning, 2001: 69) rather than engaging in physical conduct.

Despite the ways that ambassadors undertake security, one crucial dynamic of their public image is that they do not readily appear predicated as such. As a hybrid form of promotion and gentle security ambassadors are intriguing. At any given moment they can fluidly shift from a smiling face providing directions to an observer looking for

illegal conduct. As a result the security they provide is not self-evident and cannot readily be differentiated from their other job responsibilities. Since much of their work (i.e. surveillance) appears publicly informal, and not outwardly preoccupied with security, many ambassador activities can appear innocuous. Also obscuring this is the employment of younger persons as ambassadors. Compared to perceptions that those traditionally employed as policing and security are middle-aged and burly in stature, ambassadors create a more casual atmosphere. Thus in their hybrid promotion and security roles, the conduct and appearance of ambassadors does not implicate any of the negative connotations of security - particularly private forms - despite the many security duties that they do fulfill.

Based on the findings of this study, ambassador programs clearly function as a node in the network of downtown security and governance. Compared to other members of their governing network, ambassadors are a relatively agile node. By their nature they are flexible, as proven by the way that ambassador programs can be tailored to the particular needs of each downtown district. Additionally ambassador programs can adjust the relative emphasis of their organizational goals over time. While such changes are usually constructive, they may also lead to confusion over the underlying identity and ongoing purpose of a program, especially when program administrators are pressured to make frequent changes to their operations.

As Dupont (2004) asserts, network partnerships are typically “infused with collaborative values” (84) and ambassadors appear to display ways that one node gives and takes from a network. As a governing node ambassadors lend their resources and capabilities like surveillance, knowledge collection, and helping ‘hands’ to various

outside organizations including the public police, community service agencies and municipal governments. In return, ambassador programs receive benefits such as training and organizational affiliations. These features can be used to show the need for and success of the program, as well as the positive public relations that establishing official partnerships generates. Being relied on as a source of detailed statistics gives ambassadors a further way of proving the value-added benefits of their work and the need for their organization in the fabric of downtowns.

Ambassadors shed light on the governing arrangements and association within a network of security. Despite forging some successful partnerships, ambassadors also empirically demonstrated that internodal linkages may be weak or fail to materialize. Such linkages are not given or automatic. Where the conditions are right there must be sufficient incentive or recognition of common interests between nodes in order to gather together for collaboration. After analyzing the relationship between ambassadors and police it is clear that the relationship is not as formal or strong as originally hypothesized. Without minimizing the significance of 'eyes and ears' surveillance, the potential relationship between ambassadors and the police was lacking in certain respects. The police did not share all of their institutional resources and as a result did not seek to empower ambassadors with any further 'tools' to accomplish their governing objectives. This shows that the capacity for governance may grow or shrink based on the idiosyncratic way that ambassador programs attain linkages with more dominant or privileged nodes. Although the ambassadors and police did not form a particularly strong partnership, other previously unexpected nodal connections were found, particularly with their occasional assistance to community organizations. Therefore the governance and

security achieved by ambassadors is not necessarily as concentrated and strong as previously hypothesized; rather the impact of ambassadors is more expansive in terms of total nodal partners but less intense in each circumstance.

Notes:

¹ Since the distribution of gender within the ambassador population was unknown, this research may have spoken to more women than men.

² These documents are referred to as Manuals 1, 2, 3, Information Presentation PowerPoint 1, and Daily Record Sheet 1 in the text of the thesis to avoid revealing the identity of the cities.

³ Interestingly this person was the only one of the supervisors interviewed who was no longer under contract or associated with the ambassadors or their parent organization.

⁴ The results of this study are based on a case study of three ambassador programs and may not necessarily be generalizable to all ambassador programs in North America.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPLICATION

REB # _____

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR APPLICATION TO INVOLVE HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH FOR STUDENT RESEARCHERS

Please complete, print, and submit **five (5) copies (original plus four (4) copies)** of this form to the
Research Ethics Coordinator, Assumption, Room 303

CHECKLIST

Title of Project: **Downtown Ambassadors: Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage**

Student Investigator: **Mark Sleiman**

Faculty Supervisor: **Dr. Randy Lippert**

Please attach the following items, if applicable, in the following order at the back of the Application.

- ☐ Decisions Needed From Other REB Boards
- ☐ B.3.c.i. Questionnaires and Test Instruments
- ☐ B.3.d. Deception (If deception is going to be used, your application will go to Full Review)
- ☐ B.3.e. Debriefing Letter - Needed only if deception is used in the study. If submitted, application will go the Full Review.
- ☐ B.6.b. Letters of Permission Allowing Research to Take Place on Site
- ☐ B.6.d. Recruitment Materials: Advertisements, Posters, Letters, etc.
- ☒ E.1. Consent Form
- ☒ E.2. Letter of Information
- ☐ E.4. Parental/Guardian Information and Consent Form
- ☐ E.5. Assent Form

☒ F.2. Consent for Audio/Visual Taping Form

☒ Certificate of completion of on-line ethics tutorial (MUST BE
COMPLETED BY ALL STUDENTS)

**** Please make sure that all necessary signatures have been provided and that you are using the most recent version of this form (see www.uwindsor.ca/reb).**

REB # _____

**UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
APPLICATION TO INVOLVE HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH
FOR STUDENT RESEARCHERS**

Please complete, print, and submit the **original plus four (4) copies** of this form to the
Ethics and Grants Coordinator, Assumption, Room 303

Date: January 2008

Title of Research Project: Downtown Ambassadors: Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage

Projected start date of the project: January 2008

Projected completion date: May

	Name	Dept./Address	Phone/Ext.	E-mail
Student Investigator¹	Mark Sleiman	Sociology and Anthropology	██████████	sleimab@uwindsor.ca
Co-Investigator(s)	N/A			
Faculty Supervisor²	Dr. Randy Lippert	Sociology and Anthropology	519-253-3000 x3495	lippert@uwindsor.ca

2008

Researchers from another institution who are a part of a research team, irrespective of their role, must seek clarification from their institutional REB as to the requirement for review and clearance. For each researcher, please indicate if REB clearance is required or briefly provide the rationale for why it is not required:

REVIEW FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION

1. Has this application been submitted to another university REB or a hospital REB? ☐ Yes ☒ No
2. Has this application been reviewed, or will this application be reviewed, by another person or a committee for human research ethics in another organization, such as a school board?
☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES to either 1 or 2 above,

- a. provide the name of the board:
- b. provide the date of submission:
- c. provide the decision and attach a copy of the approval document:
☐ Approved ☐ Approved Pending ☐ Univ. of Windsor clearance ☐ Other/In Process

¹ STUDENT INVESTIGATOR ASSURANCE

I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and correct.

I understand that as Student Investigator, I have responsibility for the conduct of the study, the ethics performance of the project and the protection of the rights and welfare of human participants.

I agree to comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and all University of Windsor policies and procedures, governing the protection of human subjects in research.

Signature of Student Investigator: _____ Date: _____

² FACULTY SUPERVISOR ASSURANCE

Title of Research Project: Downtown Ambassadors: Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage

Student Investigator: Mark Sleiman

I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and correct.

I understand that as principal Faculty Supervisor, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the study, the ethical performance of the project and the protection of the rights and welfare of human participants.

I agree to comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and all University of Windsor policies and procedures, governing the protection of human subjects in research, including, but not limited to, the following:

- performing the project by qualified and appropriately trained personnel in accordance with REB protocol;
- implementing no changes to the REB approved protocol or consent form/statement without notification to the REB of the proposed changes and their subsequent approval of the REB;
- reporting promptly significant adverse effects to the REB within five (5) working days of occurrence; and
- submitting, at minimum, a progress report annually or in accordance with the terms of certification.

Signature of Faculty Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

A. PROJECT DETAILS

A.1. Level of Project

- ☐ Ph.D. ☒ Masters ☐ Undergraduate
☐ Post Doctoral
☐ Other (specify):

Is this research project related to a graduate course?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No
or to your thesis/dissertation?
☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please indicate the course number:

Please explain how this research project is related to your graduate course.

A.2. Funding Status

Is this project currently funded?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

If NO, is funding to be sought?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

A.3. Details of Funding (Funded or Applied for)

Agency:

☐ NSERC ORS Application Number:

☐ SSHRC ORS Application Number:

☐ Other (specify):
ORS Application Number:

Period of funding: From: To:

Type of funding:

☐ Grant ☐ Contract ☐ Research Agreement

B. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RESEARCH

B.1. Describe the purpose and background rationale for the proposed project.

Ambassador programs are initiatives of Business Improvement Associations (BIAs for short) which are meant to boost hospitality and security within BIA zone. The purpose of this research is to explore how downtown ambassadors are one source of governance within the widespread network of modern security. For my thesis research I will explore the key practices of ambassadors by assessing three ambassador programs as they exist in different cities. The importance and background rationale of this study lies in determining the governance implications of this program, specifically because ambassadors have never been substantively investigated or researched and are not commonly regarded as a provider of security.

B.2. Describe the hypothesis(es)/research questions to be examined.

My primary research question is the following: to what extent and how are ambassadors a node of security? My sub research questions include: how do ambassadors function as "eyes and ears" of other nodes, how might this surveillance fulfill the function of information collection or suggest ambassadors to be knowledge workers, how do ambassadors use or invoke law in their policing function as a private node?

B.3. Methodology/Procedures

B.3.a. Do any of the procedures involve invasion of the body (e.g. touching, contact attachment to instruments, withdrawal of specimens)?, ☐ Yes ☒ No

B.3.b. Does the study involve the administration of prescribed or proscribed drugs?
☐ Yes ☒ No

B.3.c.i. Specify in a step-by-step outline exactly what the subject(s) will be asked to do. Attach a copy of any questionnaires or test instruments.

Subjects will undergo one semi-structured, open-focused interview. They will be asked to describe their experiences in relation to the workings of ambassador programs. Where appropriate they will be asked probe questions to explore themes that were unexpected before the interview. In addition, the subject will be notified of their confidentiality.

B.3.c.ii. What is the rationale for the use of this methodology? Please discuss briefly.

This type of interview is appropriate for this research because it is open-ended in nature and can engage the respondent to provide information without feeling restricted. This will enable better research because it will allow me to get a better understanding of their responses by probing into certain answers. This will contribute to gaining the most accurate description of their experiences.

B.3.d. Will deception be used in this study?
☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, please describe and justify the need for deception.

N/A

B.3.e. Explain the debriefing procedures to be used and attach a copy of the written debriefing

N/A

B.4. Cite your experience with this kind of research. Use no more than 300 words for each research.

I have conducted qualitative interviews for undergraduate and graduate courses in qualitative research methods. As well, I have conducted semi-structured, open-focused interviews as a research assistant for Dr. Lippert in the past year.

B.5. Subjects Involved in the Study

Describe in detail the sample to be recruited including:

B.5.a. the number of subjects

Approximately twelve.

B.5.b. age range

May range in age from nineteen to sixty.

B.5.c. any special characteristics

For this research people with knowledge of or involvement with ambassador programs will be interviewed to establish what role ambassadors have in providing security. This will include BIA and police associates assigned to manage ambassadors. BIA ambassador program coordinators will have important knowledge of ambassador program operations which may not be available anywhere else. In the three different cities employing ambassadors one or two members of the local police service are assigned to work with ambassador programs and this police involvement is typically advertised on BIA website. Those police members involved in the administration of ambassador programs are an integral part of this study due to the information that they might provide about the potential alliances between the ambassadors and police.

B.5.d. institutional affiliation or where located

Not affiliated with any institutions.

B.6. Recruitment Process

B.6.a. Describe how and from what sources the subjects will be recruited.

I will recruit subjects via email and telephone calls to Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) and local police services in [REDACTED]. BIA's are special alliances of business owners who are located geographically close to each other. BIA members are taxed a special levy which is collected by the municipal government and is then filtered back to the BIA for improvement and promotion.

Contact numbers and email addresses are available in the public domain through websites and telephone directories.

I also plan to recruit through a contact I made during my research assistance. The person to be recruited has previously worked as an ambassador and research assistant to a professor for whom I have provided assistance. This person has previously indicated her potential willingness to participate in my research. Other than this link there is no relationship to the subject.

In addition, snowball sampling will be used to obtain further subjects with knowledge of ambassador programs. By snowball sampling, I mean that I will ask an interview participant to think about others who may be suitable participants for this research and then have them ask potential interview subjects for permission to be contacted by me (or similarly I could give the interview participants copies of a letter that they could in turn give to potential respondents, asking the latter to contact me if they are interested).

B.6.b. Indicate where the study will take place. If applicable, attach letter(s) of permission from organizations where research is to take place.

This study will take place in [REDACTED] as these three cities have ambassador programs. The interviews will take place in a mutually negotiated location between myself and each interview subject.

B.6.c. Describe any possible relationship between investigator(s) and subjects(s) (e.g. instructor - student; manager - employee).

There is no relationship between the investigator and subjects.

B.6.d. Copies of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment are attached.

☐ Yes ☒ No

B.7. Compensation of Subjects

B.7.a. Will subjects receive compensation for participation?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, please provide details.

N/A

B.7.b. If subjects (s) choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

N/A

B.8. Feedback to Subjects

Whenever possible, upon completion of the study, subjects should be informed of the results. Describe below the arrangements for provision of this feedback. (Please note that the REB has web space available for publishing the results at www.uwindsor.ca/reb. You can enter your study results under Study Results on the website. Please provide the date when your results will be available)

The key results of this study will be outlined in a final research report. If you would like to obtain a copy of this report, you are welcome to do so by letting the researcher know after the interview or by subsequently contacting the researcher or faculty supervisor at the address listed above.

Web address: www.uwindsor.ca/reb

Date when results are available: July 2008

C. POTENTIAL BENEFITS FROM THE STUDY

C.1. Discuss any potential direct benefits to subjects from their involvement in the project.

Subjects will be provided with invaluable insights into governance and security arrangements in their city, in particularly as it relates to role of ambassador programs.

C.2. Comment on the (potential) benefits to (the scientific community)/society that would justify involvement of subjects in this study.

This research will benefit the social science community by developing a better understanding of the networked nature of modern security, specifically concerning the practices of ambassadors.

D. POTENTIAL RISKS OF THE STUDY

D.1. Are there any psychological risks/harm?

(Might a subject feel demeaned, embarrassed, worried or upset?)

☐ Yes ☒ No

D.2. Are there any physical risks/harm?

☐ Yes ☒ No

D.3. Are there any social risks/harm? (Possible loss of status, privacy, and/or reputation?)

☒ Yes ☐ No

D.4. Describe the known and anticipated risks of the proposed research, specifying the particular risk(s)/harm associated with each procedure or task. Consider physical, psychological, emotional, and social risks/harm.

I do not anticipate any risks or harm to the interview participants. However In the event that there is a loss of security with the data collected, there could be a loss of privacy.

D.5. Describe how the potential risks to the subjects will be minimized.

To minimize any potential loss of privacy, I will anonymize the names of cities and places to the greatest extent possible. To facilitate this I will mask or omit identifying information during the transcription process. Where any of the subjects' statements can lead to recognition I will transform their responses into generic categories

E. INFORMATION AND CONSENT PROCESS

If different groups of subjects are going to be asked to do different things during the course of the research, more than one consent may be necessary (i.e. if the research can be seen as having Phase I and Phase II).

E.1. Is a copy of a **separate Consent Form** attached to this application?

☒ Yes ☐ No

E.2. Is a copy of a **separate Letter of Information** attached to this application?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If written consent WILL NOT/CANNOT be obtained or is considered inadvisable, justify this and outline the process to be used to otherwise fully inform participants.

N/A

E.3. Are subjects competent to consent?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If not, describe the process to be used to obtain permission of parent or guardian.

N/A

E.4. Is a **Parental/Guardian Information and Consent Form** attached?

☐ Yes ☒ No

E.5. Is an **Assent Form** attached?

☐ Yes ☒ No

E.6. Withdrawal from Study

E.6.a. Do subjects have the right to withdraw at any time during and after the research project?

☒ Yes ☐ No

E.6.b. Are subjects to be informed of this right?

☒ Yes ☐ No

E.6.c. Describe the process to be used to inform subjects of their withdrawal right.

It will be on the consent form, letter of information, and reiterated verbally to the subjects.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY

Definitions: **Anonymity** - when the subject cannot be identified, even by the researcher.
 Confidentiality - must be provided when the subject can be identified, even if only by the researcher.

- F.1.** Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of subjects and confidentiality of data. Explain how written records, video/audio tapes and questionnaires will be secured, and provide details of their final disposal.

The names of the interview subjects will be changed in the process of data inscription. Only the principal investigator and faculty supervisor will have access to the audio-tapes for the purpose of their transcription. They will be erased after a period of one year.

- F.2.** Is a **Consent for Audio/Video Taping Form** attached?

☒ Yes ☐ No

- F.3.** Specify if an assurance of anonymity or confidentiality is being given during:

- F.3.a.** Conduct of research

☒ Yes ☐ No

- F.3.b.** Release of findings

☒ Yes ☐ No

- F.3.c.** Details of final disposal

☒ Yes ☐ No

G. REB REVIEW OF ONGOING RESEARCH

- G.1.** Are there any specific characteristics of this research which requires additional review by the REB when the research is ongoing?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, please explain.

N/A

- G.2.** Will the results of this research be used in a way to create financial gain for the researcher?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, please explain.

N/A

- G.3.** Is there an actual or potential conflict of interest?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, please explain for researchers who are involved.

N/A

- G.4.** Please propose a continuing review process (beyond the annual **Progress Report**) you deem to be appropriate for this research project/program.

This research is not expected to extend beyond the annual Progress Report. If it does, a Progress Report will be issued every three months.

Please note that a **Progress Report** must be submitted to the Research Ethics Coordinator if your research extends beyond one year from the clearance date. A **Final Report** must be submitted when the project is completed. Forms are available at www.uwindsor.ca/reb.

H. SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

Generally, but not always, the possibility should be kept open for re-using the data obtained from research subjects.

Will, or might, the data obtained from the subjects of this research project be used in subsequent research studies?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If YES, please indicate on the Consent Form that the data may be used in other research studies.

I. CONSENT FORM

If a Consent Form is required for your research, please use the following sample **Consent Form** template. If you wish to deviate from this format, please provide the rationale. Print out the **Consent Form** with the University of Windsor logo. The information in the Consent Form **must** be written/presented in language that is clear and understandable for the intended target audience.

J. LETTER OF INFORMATION

If a Letter of Information is required for your research, please use the following sample **Letter of Information** template. If you wish to deviate from this format, please provide the rationale. Print out the **Letter of Information** with the University of Windsor logo. The Letter of Information **must** be written/presented in language that is clear and understandable for the intended target audience.

Revised November 2007

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION



LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Downtown Ambassadors: Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Mark Sleiman, under the supervision of Dr. Randy Lippert, from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. The results of this study will contribute to Mr. Sleiman's M.A. thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please contact its primary investigator or faculty supervisor:

Mark Sleiman
M.A. Candidate
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario
N9B 3P4
sleimab@uwindsor.ca

Randy Lippert, PhD
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario
N9B 3P4
519-253-3000 x 3495
lippert@uwindsor.ca.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to explore how downtown ambassadors govern as a node in the network of modern security. The background rationale is to better understand a relatively new provider of security, particularly since ambassadors programs have never been substantively investigated or researched.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- (1) Participate in a semi-structured interview of one hour in duration.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

In the event that there is a loss of security with the data collected, there could be a loss of privacy.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Subjects will be provided with invaluable insights into governance and security arrangements in their city, in particular as it relates to role of ambassador programs. This research will benefit the social science community by developing a better understanding of the networked nature of modern security, specifically concerning the practices of ambassadors.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment for your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. If you agree to be audio-taped you have the right to review/edit the audio tape. Only the principal investigator and faculty supervisor will have access to the audio-tapes they will be used only for the purpose of their transcription. They will be erased after a period of ten years.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

The key results of this study will be outlined in a final research report. If you would like to obtain a copy of this report, you are welcome to do so by letting the researcher know after the interview or by subsequently contacting the researcher or faculty supervisor at the address listed above.

Web address: www.uwindsor.ca/reb

Date when results are available: July 2008

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data will be used in subsequent studies.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Downtown Ambassadors: Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Mark Sleiman, under the supervision of Dr. Randy Lippert, from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. The results of this study will contribute to Mr. Sleiman's M.A. thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please contact its primary investigator or faculty supervisor:

Mark Sleiman
M.A. Candidate
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
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Randy Lippert, PhD
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario
N9B 3P4
519-253-3000 x 3495
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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to explore how downtown ambassadors govern as a node in the network of modern security. The background rationale is to better understand a relatively new provider of security, particularly since ambassadors programs have never been substantively investigated or researched.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

- (1) Participate in a semi-structured interview of one hour in duration.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

In the event that there is a loss of security with the data collected, there could be a loss of privacy.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Subjects will be provided with invaluable insights into governance and security arrangements in their city, in particularly as it relates to role of ambassador programs. This research will benefit the social science community by developing a better understanding of the networked nature of modern security, specifically concerning the practices of ambassadors.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment for your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. If you agree to be audio-taped you have the right to review/edit the audio tape. Only the principal investigator and faculty supervisor will have access to the audio-tapes they will be used only for the purpose of their transcription. They will be erased after a period of ten years.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

The key results of this study will be outlined in a final research report. If you would like to obtain a copy of this report, you are welcome to do so by letting the researcher know after the interview or by subsequently contacting the researcher or faculty supervisor at the address listed above.

Web address: www.uwindsor.ca/reb

Date when results are available: July 2008

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data will be used in subsequent studies.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study Downtown Ambassadors: Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING



CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING

Research Subject Name:

Title of the Project:

Downtown Ambassadors: Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage.

I consent to the audio-taping of interviews, procedures, or treatment.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I also understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that taping will be kept confidential. Tapes are filed by number only and store in a locked cabinet.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and will be for professional use only.

(Research Subject)

(Date)

APPENDIX E: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

Office of the Research Ethics Board



Today's Date: February 6, 2008
Principal Investigator: Mr. Mark Sleiman
Department/School: Sociology & Anthropology
REB Number: 08-011
Research Project Title: Downtown Ambassadors: Exploring a New Node in the Security Assemblage.
Clearance Date: February 6, 2008
Project End Date: May 31, 2008

Progress Report Due:
Final Report Due: May 31, 2008

This is to inform you that the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board (REB), which is organized and operated according to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* and the University of Windsor *Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects*, has granted approval to your research project on the date noted above. This approval is valid only until the Project End Date.

A Progress Report or Final Report is due by the date noted above. The REB may ask for monitoring information at some time during the project's approval period.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. Minor change(s) in ongoing studies will be considered when submitted on the Request to Revise form.

Investigators must also report promptly to the REB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

Forms for submissions, notifications, or changes are available on the REB website: www.uwindsor.ca/reb. If your data is going to be used for another project, it is necessary to submit another application to the REB.

We wish you every success in your research.

Maureen Muldoon, Ph.D.
Chair, Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. Randy Lippert, Sociology & Anthropology
Mark Curran, Research Ethics Coordinator

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

VITA AUCTORIS

Mark Sleiman was born in 1983 in Windsor, Ontario. He graduated from F. J. Brennan Catholic High School in 2002. From there he went on to the University of Windsor where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Criminology in 2006. He is currently a candidate for a Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of Windsor and hopes to graduate in Fall 2008.